

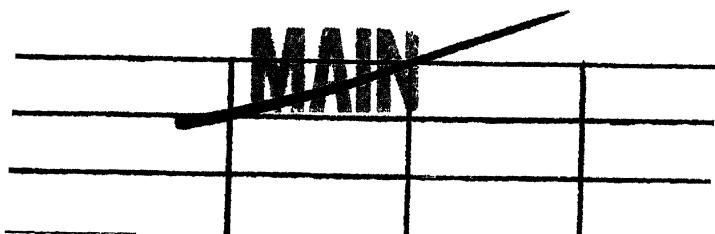
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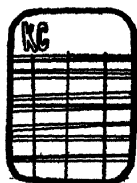
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BOOK 2: DEMOCRACY IN AN INDUSTRIAL WORLD

SECOND EDITION • REVISED AND ENLARGED

THE *Making* OF
AMERICAN *History*

EDITED BY DONALD SHEEHAN • SMITH COLLEGE

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Preface to the Revised Edition

This revision retains the basic pattern of the first edition but presents to the reader additional excerpts from the works of major historians in the areas of their special competence.

The purposes of this new edition are several. It is intended to provide material in fields omitted from the original collection, to keep the volumes abreast of current scholarship, and to meet the needs of its users. Some of the new selections are from books long established as classics, such as Dexter Perkins' *Hands Off* and Van Wyck Brooks' *The Flowering of New England*. Others, including George Kennan's *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950* and C. Vann Woodward's *Origins of the New South*, have been published since the first edition of this book appeared but seem destined to have permanent importance. For subjects which cannot be fairly represented by a single title, historiographic essays are offered which explain the major trends in interpretation. All together, ten new selections have been added. And with the exception of two deletions, the text of the first edition has been retained.

It is appropriate for the editor to express here his gratitude for the helpful comments received from teachers and students alike. A special word of thanks needs to be reserved for Professor T. Harry Williams, of Louisiana State University, Professor Sidney Fine, of the University of Michigan, and Professor Sidney Glazer, of Wayne University. Their criticisms have been particularly helpful in the planning of this revision.

DONALD SHEEHAN

Northampton, Mass.

January 3, 1954

Preface

This anthology is offered with the hope that it will form a useful supplement to textbooks in American history. Significant excerpts have been culled from the outstanding studies of several generations of our best scholars and combined into a whole illustrating the major developments in American society and government. At each focal point in the narrative of our national development, a selection is presented from the work of an expert whose special insight or ability will contribute to both understanding and interest. Although these specialists may have highly personalized views, an effort has been made to include only those writings which have gained a general acceptance among historians.

The purposes of such an anthology are several. It may, first of all, provide a solution for teachers whose desire to assign "outside" readings is thwarted by the inadequacies of the accessible libraries. Most college libraries contain individual copies of the books from which the selections in this anthology were taken, but it is manifestly futile to require three hundred readers to use a single copy. Today's students are often impatient with a course in American history which is limited to a textbook presentation. Most teachers would agree that some attempt should be made to add significance and meaning to a factual summary. It is hoped that this anthology will help to satisfy the demands of both students and teachers.

Further, students of American history should have some sense of the cumulative process of learning, some notion of how our present concepts have evolved from earlier ones. This is sometimes apparent in the selections themselves, but each introduction offers a summary of previous interpretations of the same subject and attempts to relate those interpretations to the general trends in historical analysis.

Even among scholars seeking to present an unbiased picture of the past there may be substantial disagreement. One group may find the explanation of events in political differences; another will emphasize philosophic or religious divergencies; a third will seek an economic basis for its analysis. Whether slavery was cruel or humane, whether the social contribution of Commodore Vanderbilt outweighed his ethical delinquencies—these and dozens of other specific questions

continue to induce a variety of answers. These differences, and the willing acceptance of conflicting points of view, give health and vitality to American scholarship. Individual historians may seek to explain all causation in terms of an isolated group of facts, but scholarship as a whole is not confined to the rigid dimensions of doctrinaire theory of any kind.

Some word must be said to explain why these secondary accounts are offered in preference to so-called "primary source materials." The editor feels that the average beginning student has neither the time nor the experience to depend upon contemporary documents. In a survey course, there is time for only the most elementary sampling of such material, and the fraction to which the student is exposed may not be representative of the whole. Obviously, there is much value in acquainting students with the nature of basic historical materials, but it is chiefly an illustrative value. In any case, familiarity with the most vital of the analytical studies made over a long period of years by the best historians is an essential part of historical study.

Since only works of outstanding importance have been included in this collection, the criticisms which the editor has offered in the introductions are not intended to cast doubt upon the value of the selections, but are included as a guide for the student whose ability to read critically is limited by his lack of knowledge of alternative points of view. Although many would disagree with the criticisms raised, the editor has made an attempt to avoid a personal judgment and to mention only those limitations which have been generally commented on.

Here, then, are the classical studies of our national past. All historical scholars know them, and textbook writers have built upon them. It is hoped that they will help to stimulate in students the lasting interest in history for which all teachers of the subject strive.

DONALD SHEEHAN

New York, N. Y.
February 28, 1950

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BOOK 2:

DEMOCRACY IN AN INDUSTRIAL WORLD

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PART V

THE AFTERMATH

VERNON L. PARRINGTON

ABOUT FIFTY YEARS AGO many historians believed that the writing of history could be reduced to an objective science into which the personality of the author need not enter. This theory presupposed that historical "facts," like chemical elements, could be individually isolated, then joined by some automatic and mechanical process into useful combinations which would reveal impartial "truths" about the past.

Although a desire for maximum objectivity remains a working principle of their profession, many historians now feel that it is substantially impossible for an author to divorce himself entirely from his own ideals and preconceptions. There is also a general agreement that a work is not invalidated or rendered useless simply because a historian's personal preferences have influenced his choice and interpretation of materials.

One of the best illustrations of a successful combination of strong personal convictions and unusually penetrating insight is offered by Vernon L. Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought*. The author made clear in his introduction that he was well aware that his objectivity was limited. Further, he contended that it was in part because he did have preferences differing from those of his predecessors that he felt justified in presenting his work. Whereas previous historians had tended to be Hamiltonians and had emphasized the conservatives' contribution to American development, Parrington willingly acknowledged his devotion to liberal principles and anticipated some

distortion in his views in favor of those who could be identified with the Jeffersonian tradition.

Parrington's liberalism appears to be related to his early environment. Born in Illinois, he began his teaching career in Kansas during the years of distress in the early 1890's which saw the birth of the Populist party and the rise of a national Progressive movement which continued until the First World War. Neither his undergraduate years at Harvard nor the golden haze of Coolidge prosperity at the end of his career seems to have softened his criticism of propertied interests and their literary allies. With Charles Beard, he gave voice to the historical expression of the reforming mood that produced the social indictments of Lincoln Steffens and Jacob Riis and the political programs of Woodrow Wilson and Robert La Follette.

Although it is chiefly to students of history that his work now appeals, Parrington spent most of his academic life as a professor of English. The materials out of which he fashioned his *Main Currents in American Thought*, which appeared in 1927, belong in general to literature rather than to politics and economics. Yet he had no concern with belles-lettres and only a secondary interest in literary values of any kind. The creative uniqueness of a writing was less important to him than its relation to the general intellectual climate which fostered it. It was to the main stream of America's characteristic ideas—to their origin and their evolution—that he devoted his analytical efforts. Having determined to view literature as a vehicle for ideas rather than for esthetics, Parrington removed intellectual history from philosophic abstractions and linked it with economic and social developments.

Regardless of whether its subject matter was religious, political, philosophic, or economic, Parrington related each writing to the basic theme of the continuing battle between democracy and its opponents. His virtues, ranging from the brilliance of his prose to the breadth of his knowledge and the keenness of his insight, impress themselves readily upon the reader. It is difficult

to find in historical literature a more persuasive exposition than his of the case for humanitarian liberalism in America.

So often are his deficiencies overlooked by enthusiastic admirers that it seems appropriate to give them some emphasis. Probably most criticisms of Parrington derive from the lack of balance resulting from his rampant liberalism. Although he was too conscientious a scholar to indulge in caricature, he tended to magnify the virtues of his Jeffersonian heroes and to minimize the contributions of men with whom he did not agree. To fit better into his general theme, figures such as John Adams became more conservative than they were, and others such as the New England theologian Thomas Hooker were transformed by his enthusiasm into zealous democrats. The same inclination to extremes he applied to historical eras as well. The buoyancy and productiveness of the period following the Civil War cannot be seen because the focus is concentrated on the materialism and corruption, which became for Parrington the whole truth of the era. Perhaps a more fundamental complaint can be made of his tendency to apply late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century concepts to earlier times when they may not be applicable. For example, Parrington appeared to assume that Thomas Jefferson's conception of democracy had been identical with his own. X Like other historians who emphasize the economic basis of politics, Parrington is more successful in dealing with his villains than with his heroes. If Alexander Hamilton's economic and social loyalties led to his aristocratic ideas of government, why were not Jefferson's defined by his place in a plantation, slave-holding economy? When one defends the author by referring to his description of strong liberalizing factors such as free land or the "natural rights" doctrine of John Locke, one is led to the further complaint of being left without an explanation of why such things influenced some men but not others to whom they were equally accessible. Why did liberal religious thought pass Cotton Mather by and fasten itself upon Roger Williams?

Students of literature have criticized Parrington's dispare-

ment of the literary contribution of such prominent men of letters as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe. Although he may be defended by his own statement that he was not engaged in making esthetic judgments, it seems true that he was occasionally guilty of an unjust distortion because of his insistence upon subjecting every piece of writing, regardless of its purpose, to the same sociological standards.

These few criticisms by no means exhaust the possibilities. Yet the endless multiplication of negative comments could not outweigh the legitimate praise to which Parrington is entitled. Few American writers have combined the infectious enthusiasm and sustained diligence which he displayed; even fewer have been able to stimulate the widespread interest in history with which he must be credited.

The American Scene

I

FREE AMERICA

THE POT was boiling briskly in America in the tumultuous post-war years. The country had definitely entered upon its freedom and was settling its disordered household to suit its democratic taste. Everywhere new ways were feverishly at work transforming the countryside. In the South another order was rising uncertainly on the ruins of the plantation system; in the East an expanding factory economy was weaving a different pattern of industrial life; in the Middle Border a recrudescent agriculture was arising from the application of the machine to the rich prairie soil.

From *Main Currents in American Thought* by Vernon L. Parrington, copyright, 1927, 1930, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

All over the land a spider web of iron rails was being spun that was to draw the remotest outposts into the common whole and bind the nation together with steel bands. Nevertheless two diverse worlds lay on the map of continental America. Facing in opposite directions and holding different faiths, they would not travel together easily or take comfort from the yoke that joined them. Agricultural America, behind which lay two and a half centuries of experience, was a decentralized world, democratic, individualistic, suspicious; industrial America, behind which lay only a half a dozen decades of bustling experiment, was a centralizing world, capitalistic, feudal ambitious. The one was a decaying order, the other a rising, and between them would be friction till one or the other had become master.

Continental America was still half frontier and half settled country. A thin line of homesteads had been thrust westward till the outposts reached well into the Middle Border—an uncertain thread running through eastern Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas, overleaping the Indian Territory and then running west into Texas—approximately halfway between the Atlantic and the Pacific. Behind these outposts was still much unoccupied land, and beyond stretched the unfenced prairies till they merged in the sagebrush plains, gray and waste, that stretched to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Beyond the mountains were other stretches of plains and deserts, vast and forbidding in their alkali blight, to the wooded coast ranges and the Pacific Coast. In all this immense territory were only scattered settlements—at Denver, Salt Lake City, Sacramento, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and elsewhere—tiny outposts in the wilderness, with scattered hamlets, mining camps, and isolated homesteads lost in the great expanse. On the prairies from Mexico to Canada—across which rumbled great herds of buffalo—roved powerful tribes of hostile Indians who fretted against the forward thrust of settlement and disputed the right of possession. The urgent business of the times was the subduing of this wild region, wresting it from Indians and buffalo and wilderness; and the forty years that lay between the California Gold Rush of '49 and the Oklahoma Land Rush of '89 saw the greatest wave of pioneer expansion—the swiftest and most reckless—in all our pioneer experience. Expansion on so vast a scale necessitated building, and the seventies became the railway age,

bonding the future to break down present barriers of isolation, and opening new territories for later exploitation. The reflux of the great movement swept back upon the Atlantic coast and gave to life there a fresh note of spontaneous vigor, of which the Gilded Age was the inevitable expression.

It was this energetic East, with its accumulations of liquid capital awaiting investment and its factories turning out the materials needed to push the settlements westward, that profited most from the conquest of the far West. The impulsion from the frontier did much to drive forward the industrial revolution. The war that brought devastation to the South had been more friendly to northern interests. In gathering the scattered rills of capital into central reservoirs at Philadelphia and New York, and in expanding the factory system to supply the needs of the armies, it had opened to capitalism its first clear view of the Promised Land. The bankers had come into control of the liquid wealth of the nation, and the industrialists had learned to use the machine for production; the time was ripe for exploitation on a scale undreamed-of a generation before. Up till then the potential resources of the continent had not even been surveyed. Earlier pioneers had only scratched the surface—felling trees, making crops, building pygmy watermills, smelting a little iron. Mineral wealth had been scarcely touched. Tools had been lacking to develop it, capital had been lacking, transportation lacking, technical methods lacking, markets lacking.

In the years following the war, exploitation for the first time was provided with adequate resources and a competent technique, and busy prospectors were daily uncovering new sources of wealth. The coal and oil of Pennsylvania and Ohio, the copper and iron ore of upper Michigan, the gold and silver, lumber and fisheries, of the Pacific Coast, provided limitless raw materials for the rising industrialism. The Bessemer process quickly turned an age of iron into an age of steel and created the great rolling mills of Pittsburgh from which issued the rails for expanding railways. The reaper and binder, the sulky plow and the threshing machine, created a large-scale agriculture on the fertile prairies. Wild grass-lands provided grazing for immense herds of cattle and sheep; the development of the corn-belt enormously increased the supply of hogs; and with railways at hand the Middle Border poured into Omaha and Kan-

sas City and Chicago an endless stream of produce. As the line of the frontier pushed westward new towns were built, thousands of homesteads were filed on, and the speculator and promoter hovered over the prairies like buzzards seeking their carrion. With rising land-values money was to be made out of unearned increment, and the creation of booms was a profitable industry. The times were stirring and it was a shiftless fellow who did not make his pile. If he had been too late to file on desirable acres he had only to find a careless homesteader who had failed in some legal technicality and "jump his claim." Good bottom land could be had even by late-comers if they were sharp at the game.

This bustling America of 1870 accounted itself a democratic world. A free people had put away all aristocratic privileges and conscious of its power went forth to possess the last frontier. Its social philosophy, which it found adequate to its needs, was summed up in three words—preemption, exploitation, progress. Its immediate and pressing business was to dispossess the government of its rich holdings. Lands in the possession of the government were so much idle waste, untaxed and profitless; in private hands they would be developed. They would provide work, pay taxes, support schools, enrich the community. Preemption meant exploitation and exploitation meant progress. It was a simple philosophy and it suited the simple individualism of the times. The Gilded Age knew nothing of the Enlightenment; it recognized only the acquisitive instinct. That much at least the frontier had taught the great American democracy; and in applying to the resources of a continent the lesson it had been so well taught the Gilded Age wrote a profoundly characteristic chapter of American history.

II

FIGURES OF EARTH

In a moment of special irritation Edwin Lawrence Godkin called the civilization of the seventies a chromo civilization. Mark Twain, with his slack western standards, was equally severe. As he contemplated the slovenly reality beneath the gaudy exterior he dubbed it the Gilded Age. Other critics with a gift for pungent phrase have flung their gibes at the ways of a picturesque and uncouth genera-

tion. There is reason in plenty for such caustic comment. Heedless, irreverent, unlovely, cultivating huge beards, shod in polished top-boots—the last refinement of the farmer's cowhides—wearing linen dickeys over hickory shirts, moving through pools of tobacco juice, erupting in shoddy and grotesque architecture, cluttering its homes with ungainly walnut chairs and marble-topped tables and heavy lambrequins, the decade of the seventies was only too plainly mired and floundering in a bog of bad taste. A world of triumphant and unabashed vulgarity without its like in our history, it was not aware of its plight, but accounted its manners genteel and boasted of ways that were a parody on sober good sense.

Yet just as such comments are, they do not reach quite to the heart of the age. They emphasize rather the excrescences, the casual lapses, of a generation that underneath its crudities and vulgarities was boldly adventurous and creative—a generation in which the democratic freedoms of America, as those freedoms had taken shape during a drab frontier experience, came at last to spontaneous and vivid expression. If its cultural wealth was less than it thought, if in its exuberance it was engaged somewhat too boisterously in stamping its own plebeian image on the work of its hands, it was only natural to a society that for the first time found its opportunities equal to its desires, a youthful society that accounted the world its oyster and wanted no restrictions laid on its will. It was the ripe fruit of Jacksonian leveling, and if it ran to a grotesque individualism—if in its self-confidence it was heedless of the smiles of older societies—it was nevertheless by reason of its uncouthness the most picturesque generation in our history; and for those who love to watch human nature disporting itself with naïve abandon, running amuck through all the conventions, no other age provides so fascinating a spectacle.

When the cannon at last had ceased their destruction it was a strange new America that looked out confidently on the scene. Something had been released by the upheavals of half a century, something strong and assertive that was prepared to take possession of the continent. It did not issue from the loins of war. Its origins must be sought elsewhere, further back in time. It had been cradled in the vast changes that since 1815 had been reshaping America: in the break-up of the old domestic economy that kept life mean and drab, in the noisy enthusiasms of the new coonskin democracy, in

the romanticisms of the California gold rush, in the boisterous freedoms discovered by the forties and fifties. It had come to manhood in the battles of a tremendous war, and as it now surveyed the continent, discovering potential wealth before unknown, it demanded only freedom and opportunity—a fair race and no favors. Everywhere was a welling-up of primitive pagan desires after long repressions—to grow rich, to grasp power, to be strong and masterful and lay the world at its feet. It was a violent reaction from the narrow poverty of frontier life and the narrow inhibitions of backwoods religion. It had had enough of skimpy, meager ways, of scrubbing along hoping for something to turn up. It would go out and turn it up. It was consumed with a great hunger for abundance, for the good things of life, for wealth. It was frankly materialistic and if material goods could be wrested from society it would lay its hands heartily to the work. Freedom and opportunity, to acquire, to possess, to enjoy—for that it would sell its soul.

Society of a sudden was become fluid. With the sweeping-away of the last aristocratic restraints the potentialities of the common man found release for self-assertion. Strange figures, sprung from obscure origins, thrust themselves everywhere upon the scene. In the reaction from the mean and skimpy, a passionate will to power was issuing from unexpected sources, undisciplined, confused in ethical values, but endowed with immense vitality. Individualism was being simplified to the acquisitive instinct. These new Americans were primitive souls, ruthless, predatory, capable; single-minded men; rogues and rascals often, but never feeble, never hindered by petty scruple, never given to puling or whining—the raw materials of a race of capitalistic buccaneers. Out of the drab mass of common plebeian life had come this vital energy that erupted in amazing abundance and in strange forms. The new freedoms meant diverse things to different men and each like Jurgen followed after his own wishes and his own desires. Pirate and priest issued from the common source and played their parts with the same picturesqueness. The romantic age of Captain Kidd was come again, and the black flag and the gospel banner were both in lockers to be flown as the needs of the cruise determined. With all coercive restrictions put away the democratic genius of America was setting out on the road of manifest destiny.

Analyze the most talked-of men of the age and one is likely to find a splendid audacity coupled with an immense wastefulness. A note of tough-mindedness marks them. They had stout nippers. They fought their way encased in rhinoceros hides. There was the Wall Street crowd—Daniel Drew, Commodore Vanderbilt, Jim Fisk, Jay Gould, Russell Sage—blackguards for the most part, railway wreckers, cheaters and swindlers, but picturesque in their rascality. There was the numerous tribe of politicians—Boss Tweed, Fernando Wood, G. Oakey Hall, Senator Pomeroy, Senator Cameron, Roscoe Conkling, James G. Blaine—blackguards also for the most part, looting city treasuries, buying and selling legislative votes like railway stock, but picturesque in their audacity. There were the professional keepers of the public morals—Anthony Comstock, John B. Gough, Dwight L. Moody, Henry Ward Beecher, T. De Witt Talmage—ardent proselytizers, unintellectual, men of one idea, but fiery in zeal and eloquent in description of the particular heaven each wanted to people with his fellow Americans. And springing up like mushrooms after a rain was the goodly company of cranks—Victoria Woodhull and Tennessee Claflin, "Citizen" George Francis Train, Henry Bergh, Ben Butler, Ignatius Donnelly, Bob Ingersoll, Henry George—picturesque figures with a flair for publicity who tilled their special fields with splendid gestures. And finally there was Barnum the Showman, growing rich on the profession of humbuggery, a vulgar greasy genius, pure brass without any gilding, yet in picturesque and capable effrontery the very embodiment of the age. A marvelous company, vital with the untamed energy of a new land. In the presence of such men one begins to understand what Walt Whitman meant by his talk of the elemental.

Created by a primitive world that knew not the machine, they were marked by the rough homeliness of their origins. Whether wizened or fat they were never insignificant or commonplace. On the whole one prefers them fat, and for solid bulk what generation has outdone them? There was Revivalist Moody, bearded and neckless, with his two hundred and eighty pounds of Adam's flesh, every ounce of which "belonged to God." There was the lyric Sankey, afflicted with two hundred and twenty-five pounds of human frailty, yet looking as smug as a banker and singing "There were ninety and nine" divinely through mutton-chop whiskers. There was Boss

Tweed, phlegmatic and mighty, overawing rebellious gangsters at the City Hall with his two hundred and forty pounds of pugnacious rascality. There was John Fiske, a philosophic hippopotamus, warming the chill waters of Spencerian science with his prodigious bulk. There was Ben Butler, oily and puffy and wheezy, like Falstaff larding the lean earth as he walked along, who yearly added more flesh to the scant ninety-seven pounds he carried away from Waterville College. And there was Jim Fisk, dressed like a bartender, huge in nerve as in bulk, driving with the dashing Josie Mansfield down Broadway—prince of vulgarians, who jovially proclaimed, "I worship in the Synagogue of the Libertines," and who on the failure of the Erie coup announced cheerfully, "Nothing is lost save honor!"

Impressive as are the fat kine of Egypt, the lean kine scarcely suffer by contrast. There were giants of puny physique in those days. There was Uncle Dan'l Drew, thin as a dried herring, yet a builder of churches and founder of Drew Theological Seminary, who pilfered and cheated his way to wealth with tobacco juice drooling from his mouth. There was Jay Gould, a lone-hand gambler, a dynamo in a tubercular body, who openly invested in the devil's tenements as likely to pay better dividends, and went home to potter lovingly amongst his exotic flowers. And there was Oakey Hall, clubman and playwright, small, elegant, and unscrupulous; and Victoria Woodhull who stirred up the Beecher case, a wisp of a woman who enraged all the frumpy blue-stockings by the smartness of her toilet and the perfection of her manners; and little Libby Tilton with her tiny wistful face and great eyes that looked out wonderingly at the world—eyes that were to go blind with weeping before the candle of her life went out. It was such men and women, individual and colorful, that Whitman and Mark Twain mingled with, and that Herman Melville—colossal and dynamic beyond them all—looked out upon sardonically from his tomb in the Custom House where he was consuming his own heart.

They were thrown up as it were casually out of the huge caldron of energy that was America. All over the land were thousands like them, self-made men quick to lay hands on opportunity if it knocked at the door, ready to seek it out if it were slow in knocking, recognizing no limitations to their powers, discouraged by no shortcoming in their training. When Moody set out to bring the world to

his Protestant God he was an illiterate shoe salesman who stumbled over the hard words of his King James Bible. Anthony Comstock, the roundsman of the Lord, was a salesman in a drygoods shop, and as careless of his spelling as he was careful of his neighbors' morals. Commodore Vanderbilt, who built up the greatest fortune of the time, was a Brooklyn ferryman, hard-fisted and tough as a burr-oak, who in a lifetime of over eighty years read only one book, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and that after he was seventy. Daniel Drew was a shyster cattle-drover, whose arid emotions found outlet in periodic conversions and backslidings, and who got on in this vale of tears by salting his cattle and increasing his—and the Lord's—wealth with every pound of water in their bellies—from which cleverness is said to have come the Wall Street phrase, "stock-watering." Jim Fisk was the son of a Yankee peddler, who, disdaining the unambitious ways of his father, set up for himself in a cart gilded like a circus-wagon and drove about the countryside with jingling bells. After he had made his pile in Wall Street he set up his own opera house and proposed to rival the Medici as a patron of the arts—and especially of the artists if they were of the right sex. A surprising number of them—Moody, Beecher, Barnum, Fisk, Comstock, Ben Butler—came from New England; Jay Gould was of Connecticut ancestry; but Oakey Hall was a southern gentleman; Fernando Wood, with the face of an Apollo and the wit of an Irishman, was the son of a Philadelphia cigar-maker and much of his early income was drawn from sailors' groggeries along the waterfront; Tweed was a stolid New Yorker, and Drew was a York State country boy.

What was happening in New York was symptomatic of the nation. If the temple of Plutus was building in Wall Street, his devotees were everywhere. In Chicago, rising higgledy-piggledy from the ashes of the great fire, Phil Armour and Nelson Morris were laying out stockyards and drawing the cattle and sheep and hogs from remote prairie farms to their slaughter-houses. In Cleveland, Mark Hanna was erecting his smelters and turning the iron ore of Michigan into dollars, while John D. Rockefeller was squeezing the small fry out of the petroleum business and creating the Standard Oil monopoly. In Pittsburgh, Andrew Carnegie was applying the Bessemer process to steel-making and laying the foundations of the later steel trust. In Minneapolis, C. C. Washburn and Charles A. Pillsbury were ap-

plying new methods to milling and turning the northern wheat into flour to ship to the ends of the earth. In San Francisco, Leland Stanford and Collis P. Huntington were amassing huge fortunes out of the Southern Pacific Railway and bringing the commonwealth of California to their feet. Everywhere were boom-town and real-estate promoters, the lust of speculation, the hankering after quick and easy wealth.

In the great spaces from Kansas City to Sacramento the frontier spirit was in the gaudiest bloom. The experiences of three centuries of expansion were being crowded into as many decades. In the fifties the highway of the frontier had run up and down the Mississippi River and the golden age of steamboating had brought a motley life to Saint Louis; in the seventies the frontier had passed far beyond and was pushing through the Rocky Mountains, repeating as it went the old frontier story of swagger and slovenliness, of boundless hope and heroic endurance—a story deeply marked with violence and crime and heart-breaking failure. Thousands of veterans from the disbanded armies, northern and southern alike, flocked to the West to seek their fortunes, and daily life there soon took on a drab note from the alkali of the plains; yet through the drabness ran a boisterous humor that exalted lying to a fine art—a humor that goes back to Davy Crockett and the Ohio flatboatmen. Mark Twain's *Roughing It* is the epic of this frontier of the Pony Express, as *Life on the Mississippi* is the epic of the preceding generation.

The huge wastefulness of the frontier was everywhere, East and West. The Gilded Age heeded somewhat too literally the Biblical injunction to take no thought for the morrow, but was busily intent on squandering the resources of the continent. All things were held cheap, and human life cheapest of all. Wild Bill Hickok with forty notches on his gun and a row of graves to his credit in Boot Hill Cemetery, and Jesse James, most picturesque of desperadoes, levying toll with his six-shooter on the bankers who were desecrating the free spirit of the plains with their two per cent. a month, are familiar heroes in Wild West tales; but the real plainsman of the Gilded Age, the picturesque embodiment of the last frontier, was Captain Carver, the faultless horseman and faultless shot, engaged in his celebrated buffalo hunt for the championship of the prairies. Wagering that he

could kill more buffalo in a day than any rival hero of the chase, he rode forth with his Indian marker and dropping the miles behind him he left an endless trail of dead beasts properly tagged, winning handsomely when his rival's horse fell dead from exhaustion. It was magnificent. Davy Crockett's hundred and five bears in a season was but 'prentice work compared with Captain Carver's professional skill. It is small wonder that he became a hero of the day and his rifle, turned now to the circus business of breaking glass balls thrown from his running horse, achieved a fame far greater than Davy's Betsy. With his bold mustaches, his long black hair flying in the wind, his sombrero and chaps and top-boots, he was a figure matched only by Buffalo Bill, the last of the great plainsmen.

Captain Carver was picturesque, but what shall be said of the thousands of lesser Carvers engaged in the same slaughter, market-hunters who discovered a new industry in buffalo-killing? At the close of the Civil War the number on the western plains was estimated at fifteen millions. With the building of the Union Pacific Railroad they were cut asunder into two vast herds, and upon these herds fell the hunters with the new breech-loading rifles, shooting for the hide market that paid sixty-five cents for a bull's hide and a dollar and fifteen cents for a cow's. During the four years from 1871 to 1874 nearly a million head a year were slain from the southern herd alone, their skins ripped off and the carcasses left for the coyotes and buzzards. By the end of the hunting-season of 1875 the vast southern herd had been wiped out, and with the building of the Northern Pacific in 1880 the smaller northern herd soon suffered the same fate. The buffalo were gone with the hostile Indians—Sioux and Blackfeet and Cheyennes and a dozen other tribes.¹ It was the last dramatic episode of the American frontier, and it wrote a fitting climax to three centuries of wasteful conquest. But the prairies were tamed, and Wild Bill Hickok and Captain Carver and Buffalo Bill Cody had become romantic figures to enthrall the imagination of later generations.²

¹ See Allan Nevins, "The Taming of the West," in *The Emergence of Modern America*.

² It is the same story in the matter of the passenger pigeon. In early days the flights of these birds ran to untold millions. The last great nesting was at Petoskey, Michigan, in 1878, covering a strip forty miles long and from three to ten miles wide. Upon the nests fell the market-hunters and a million and a half

It was an abundant harvest of those freedoms that America had long been struggling to achieve, and it was making ready the ground for later harvests that would be less to its liking. Freedom had become individualism, and individualism had become the inalienable right to preempt, to exploit, to squander. Gone were the old ideals along with the old restraints. The idealism of the forties, the romanticism of the fifties—all the heritage of Jeffersonianism and the French Enlightenment—were put thoughtlessly away, and with no social conscience, no concern for civilization, no heed for the future of the democracy it talked so much about, the Gilded Age threw itself into the business of money-getting. From the sober restraints of aristocracy, the old inhibitions of Puritanism, the niggardliness of an exacting domestic economy, it swung far back in reaction, and with the discovery of limitless opportunities for exploitation it allowed itself to get drunk. Figures of earth, they followed after their own dreams. Some were builders with grandiose plans in their pockets; others were wreckers with no plans at all. It was an anarchistic world of strong, capable men, selfish, unenlightened, amoral—an excellent example of what human nature will do with undisciplined freedom. In the Gilded Age freedom was the freedom of buccaneers preying on the argosies of Spain.

III

POLITICS AND THE FAIRY GODMOTHER

Certainly the Gilded Age would have resented such an interpretation of its brisk activities. In the welter of change that resulted from the application of the machine to the raw materials of a continent, it chose rather to see the spirit of progress to which the temper of the American people was so responsive. Freedom, it was convinced, was justifying itself by its works. The eighteenth century had been static, the nineteenth century was progressive. It was adaptable, quick to change its ways and its tools, ready to accept whatever proved advantageous—pragmatic, opportunist. It was not stifled by the dead hand of custom but was free to adapt means to ends. It

squabs were shipped to New York by rail, besides the thousands wasted. Within a generation the passenger pigeon had become extinct. See W. B. Mershon, *Outdoor Life and Recreation*, February, 1929, p. 26 ff.

accepted progress as it accepted democracy, without questioning the sufficiency of either. The conception accorded naturally with a frontier psychology. Complete opportunism is possible only amongst a people that is shallow-rooted, that lives in a fluid society, scantily institutionalized, with few vested interests. In a young society it is easy, in a maturing society it becomes increasingly difficult.

Dazzled by the results of the new technique of exploitation applied on a grand scale to unpreempted opportunities, it is no wonder the Gilded Age thought well of its labors and confused the pattern of life it was weaving with the pattern of a national civilization. It had drunk in the idea of progress with its mother's milk. It was an inevitable frontier interpretation of the swift changes resulting from a fluid economics and a fluid society in process of settling into static ways. It served conveniently to describe the changes from the simplicities of social beginnings to the complexities of a later order. It was made use of following the War of 1812 to explain the stir resulting from the westward expansion and the great increase in immigration; but it was given vastly greater significance by the social unsettlements that came with the industrial revolution. With the realization of the dramatic changes in manner of living—the added conveniences of life, release from the laborious round of the domestic economy, ease of transportation—that resulted from the machine order, it was inevitable that the idea of progress should have been on every man's tongue. (The increase of wealth visible to all was in itself a sufficient sign of progress, and as the novelty of the industrial change wore off and the economy of America was more completely industrialized, it was this augmenting wealth that symbolized it.)

In such fashion the excellent ideal of progress that issued from the social enthusiasms of the Enlightenment was taken in charge by the Gilded Age and transformed into a handmaid of capitalism. Its duties were narrowed to the single end of serving profits and its accomplishments came to be exactly measured by bank clearings. It was unfortunate but inevitable. The idea was too seductive to the American mentality not to be seized upon and made to serve a rising order. Exploitation was the business of the times and how better could exploitation throw about its activities the sanction of idealism than by wedding them to progress? It is a misfortune that America has never subjected the abstract idea of progress to critical

examination. Content with the frontier and capitalistic interpretations it has confused change with betterment, and when a great idealist of the Gilded Age demonstrated to America that it was misled and pointed out that the path of progress it was following was the highway to poverty, he was hooted from the market-place.

Having thus thrown the mantle of progress about the Gold Dust twins, the Gilded Age was ready to bring the political forces of America into harmony with the program of preëemption and exploitation. The situation could hardly have been more to its liking. Post-war America was wholly lacking in political philosophies, wholly opportunist. The old party cleavage between agriculture and industry had been obscured and the logic of party alignment destroyed by the struggle over slavery. Democrat and Whig no longer faced each other conscious of the different ends they sought. The great party of Jefferson and Jackson was prostrate, borne down by the odium of slavery and secession. In the North elements of both had been drawn into a motley war party, momentarily fused by the bitterness of conflict, but lacking any common program, certain indeed to split on fundamental economic issues. The Whig Republican was still Hamiltonian paternalistic, and the Democrat Republican was still Jeffersonian *laissez faire*, and until it was determined which wing should control the party councils there would be only confusion. The politicians were fertile in compromises, but in nominating Lincoln and Johnson the party ventured to get astride two horses that would not run together. To attempt to make yoke-fellows of democratic leveling and capitalistic paternalism was prophetic of rifts and schisms that only the passions of Reconstruction days could hold in check.

In 1865 the Republican party was no other than a war machine that had accomplished its purpose. It was a political mongrel, without logical cohesion, and it seemed doomed to break up as the Whig party had broken up and the Federalist party had broken up. But fate was now on the side of the Whigs as it had not been earlier. The democratic forces had lost strength from the war, and democratic principles were in ill repute. The drift to centralization, the enormous development of capitalism, the spirit of exploitation, were prophetic of a changing temper that was preparing to exalt the doctrine of manifest destiny which the Whig party stood sponsor for.

The middle class was in the saddle and it was time to bring the political state under its control. The practical problem of the moment was to transform the mongrel Republican party into a strong cohesive instrument, and to accomplish that it was necessary to hold the loyalty of its Democratic voters amongst the farmers and working-classes whilst putting into effect its Whig program.

Under normal conditions the thing would have been impossible, but the times were wrought up and blindly passionate and the politicians skillful. The revolt of Andrew Johnson came near to bringing the party on the rocks; but the undisciplined Jacksonians were overthrown by the appeal to the Bloody Flag and put to flight by the nomination of General Grant for the presidency. The rebellion of the Independent Republicans under Horace Greeley in 1872 was brought to nothing by the skillful use of Grant's military prestige, and the party passed definitely under the control of capitalism, and became such an instrument for exploitation as Henry Clay dreamed of but could not perfect. Under the nominal leadership of the easy-going Grant a loose rein was given to Whiggish ambitions and the Republican party became a political instrument worthy of the Gilded Age.

The triumph of Whiggery was possible because the spirit of the Gilded Age was Whiggish. The picturesque embodiment of the multitude of voters who hurrahed for Grant and the Grand Old Party was a figure who had grown his first beard in the ebullient days before Secession. Colonel Beriah Sellers, with his genial optimism and easy political ethics, was an epitome of the political hopes of the Gilded Age. With a Micawber-like faith in his country and his government, eager to realize on his expansive dreams and looking to the national treasury to scatter its fructifying millions in the neighborhood of his speculative holdings, he was no other than Uncle Sam in the boisterous days following Appomattox. The hopes that floated up out of his dreams were the hopes of millions who cast their votes for Republican Congressmen who in return were expected to cast their votes for huge governmental appropriations that would insure prosperity's reaching certain post-office addresses. Citizens had saved the government in the trying days that were past; it was only fair in return that government should aid the patriotic citizen in the necessary work of developing national resources. It was

paternalism as understood by speculators and subsidy-hunters, but was it not a part of the great American System that was to make the country rich and self-sufficient? The American System had been talked of for forty years; it had slowly got on its feet in pre-war days despite the stubborn planter opposition; now at last it had fairly come into its own. The time was ripe for the Republican party to become a fairy godmother to the millions of Beriah Sellerses throughout the North and West.

It is plain as a pikestaff why the spirit of Whiggery should have taken riotous possession of the Gilded Age. With its booming industrial cities America in 1870 was fast becoming capitalistic, and in every capitalistic society Whiggery springs up as naturally as pig-weed in a garden. However attractive the disguises it may assume, it is in essence the logical creed of the profit philosophy. It is the expression in politics of the acquisitive instinct and it assumes as the greatest good the shaping of public policy to promote private interests. It asserts that it is a duty of the state to help its citizens to make money, and it conceives of the political state as a useful instrument for effective exploitation. How otherwise? The public good cannot be served apart from business interests, for business interests are the public good and in serving business the state is serving society. Everybody's eggs are in the basket and they must not be broken. For a capitalistic society Whiggery is the only rational politics, for it exalts the profit-motive as the sole object of parliamentary concern. Government has only to wave its wand and fairy gifts descend upon business like the golden sands of Pactolus. It graciously bestows its tariffs and subsidies, and streams of wealth flow into private wells.

But unhappily there is a fly in the Whiggish honey. In a competitive order, government is forced to make its choices. It cannot serve both Peter and Paul. If it gives with one hand it must take away with the other. And so the persuasive ideal of paternalism in the common interest degenerates in practice into legalized favoritism. Governmental gifts go to the largest investments. Lesser interests are sacrificed to greater interests and Whiggery comes finally to serve the lords of the earth without whose good will the wheels of business will not turn. To him that hath shall be given. If the few do not

prosper the many will starve, and if the many have bread who would begrudge the few their abundance? In Whiggery is the fulfillment of the Scriptures.

Henry Clay had been a prophetic figure pointing the way America was to travel; but he came a generation too soon. A son of the Gilded Age, he was doomed to live in a world of Jacksonian democracy. But the spirit of Henry Clay survived his death and his followers were everywhere in the land. The plain citizen who wanted a slice of the rich prairie land of Iowa or Kansas, with a railway convenient to his homestead, had learned to look to the government for a gift, and if he got his quarter-section and his transportation he was careless about what the other fellow got. A little more or less could make no difference to a country inexhaustible in resources. America belonged to the American people and not to the government, and resources in private hands paid taxes and increased the national wealth. In his favorite newspaper, the *New York Tribune*, he read daily appeals for the adoption of a patriotic national economy, by means of which an infant industrialism, made prosperous by a protective tariff, would provide a home market for the produce of the farmer and render the country self-sufficient. Money would thus be put in everybody's pocket. Protection was not robbing Peter to pay Paul, but paying both Peter and Paul out of the augmented wealth of the whole.

The seductive arguments that Horace Greeley disseminated amongst the plain people, Henry Carey purveyed to more intelligent ears. The most distinguished American economist of the time, Carey had abandoned his earlier *laissez-faire* position, and having convinced himself that only through a close-knit national economy could the country develop a well-rounded economic program, he had become the most ardent of protectionists. During the fifties and later he was tireless in popularizing the doctrine of a natural harmony of interests between agriculture and manufacturing, and to a generation expanding rapidly in both fields his able presentation made great appeal. It was but a step from protectionism to governmental subsidies. Beriah Sellers and Henry Clay had come to be justified by the political economists. (Note that amongst Carey's converts were such different idealists as Wendell Phillips and Peter Cooper.)

IV

THE GREAT BARBECUE

Horace Greeley and Henry Carey were only straws in the wind that during the Gilded Age was blowing the doctrine of paternalism about the land. A Colonel Sellers was to be found at every fireside talking the same blowsy doctrine. Infectious in their optimism, naïve in their faith that something would be turned up for them by the government if they made known their wants, they were hoping for dollars to be put in their pockets by a generous administration at Washington. Congress had rich gifts to bestow—in lands, tariffs, subsidies, favors of all sorts; and when influential citizens made their wishes known to the reigning statesmen, the sympathetic politicians were quick to turn the government into the fairy godmother the voters wanted it to be. A huge barbecue was spread to which all presumably were invited. Not quite all, to be sure; inconspicuous persons, those who were at home on the farm or at work in the mills and offices, were overlooked; a good many indeed out of the total number of the American people. But all the important persons, leading bankers and promoters and business men, received invitations. There wasn't room for everybody and these were presumed to represent the whole. It was a splendid feast. If the waiters saw to it that the choicest portions were served to favored guests, they were not unmindful of their numerous homespun constituency and they loudly proclaimed the fine democratic principle that what belongs to the people should be enjoyed by the people—not with petty bureaucratic restrictions, not as a social body, but as individuals, each free citizen using what came to hand for his own private ends, with no questions asked.

It was sound Gilded Age doctrine. To a frontier people what was more democratic than a barbecue, and to a paternalistic age what was more fitting than that the state should provide the beeves for roasting. Let all come and help themselves. As a result the feast was Gargantuan in its rough plenty. The abundance was what was to be expected of a generous people. More food, to be sure, was spoiled than was eaten, and the revelry was a bit unseemly; but it was a fine spree in the name of the people, and the invitations had been

written years before by Henry Clay. But unfortunately what was intended to be jovially democratic was marred by displays of plebeian temper. Suspicious commoners with better eyes than manners discovered the favoritism of the waiters and drew attention to the difference between their own meager helpings and the heaped-up plates of more favored guests. It appeared indeed that there was gross discrimination in the service; that the farmers' pickings from the Homestead Act were scanty in comparison with the speculators' pickings from the railway land-grants. The *Crédit Mobilier* scandal and the Whisky Ring scandal and divers other scandals came near to breaking up the feast, and the genial host—who was no other than the hero of Appomattox—came in for some sharp criticism. But after the more careless ones who were caught with their fingers where they didn't belong, had been thrust from the table, the eating and drinking went on again till only the great carcasses were left. Then at last came the reckoning. When the bill was sent in to the American people the farmers discovered that they had been put off with the giblets while the capitalists were consuming the turkey. They learned that they were no match at a barbecue for more voracious guests, and as they went home unsatisfied, a sullen anger burned in their hearts that was to express itself later in fierce agrarian revolts.

What reason there was for such anger, how differently rich and poor fared at the democratic feast, is suggested by the contrast between the Homestead Act and the Union Pacific land-grant. Both were war-time measures and both had emerged from the agitations of earlier decades. By the terms of the former the homesteader got his hundred and sixty acres at the price of \$1.25 an acre; by the terms of the latter the promoters got a vast empire for nothing. It was absurd, of course, but what would you have? The people wanted the railway built and Collis P. Huntington was willing to build it on his own terms. The government was too generous to haggle with public-spirited citizens, and too Whiggish to want to discourage individual enterprise. Ever since the cession of California there had been much talk of a continental railway to tie the country together. In the first years the talk in Congress had all been of a great national venture; the road must be built by the nation to serve the common interests of the American people. But unfortunately sectional jeal-

ousies prevented any agreement as to the route the survey lines were to run, and the rising capitalism was becoming powerful enough to bring into disfavor any engagement of the government in a work that promised great rewards. Under its guidance political opinion was skillfully turned into the channel of private enterprise. The public domain backed by the public credit, it was agreed, must pay for the road, but the government must not seek to control the enterprise or look to profit from it directly; the national reward would come indirectly from the opening-up of vast new territories.

The definite shift in policy came about the year 1855. In 1837 Stephen A. Douglas had been the driving force behind the state enterprise of building the Illinois Central Railway. In 1853 he proposed that the Pacific Railroad should be built by private enterprise. With the change promptly came a request for a patriotic land-grant. The government was expected to provide the road, it appeared, but private enterprise was to own it and manage it in the interest of speculators rather than the public. For old-fashioned souls like Thomas A. Benton, who still remembered the Jeffersonian concern for the common well-being, it was a bitter mess to swallow.

I would have preferred [he said] that Congress should have made the road, as a national work, on a scale commensurate with its grandeur and let out the use of it to companies, who would fetch and carry on the best terms for the people and the government. But that hope has vanished . . . a private company has become the resource and the preference. I embrace it as such, utterly scouting all plans for making private roads at national expense, of paying for the use of roads built with our land and money, of bargaining with corporations or individuals for the use of what we give them.³

With this speech the old Jeffersonianism pulled down its flag and the new Whiggery ran up its black banner. The Gilded Age had begun and Old Bullion Benton had outlived his time. In the tumultuous decades that followed there was to be no bargaining with corporations for the use of what the public gave; they took what they wanted and no impertinent questions were asked. The hungriest will get the most at the barbecue. A careless wastefulness when the supply is unlimited is perhaps natural enough. There were hard-

³ Quoted in J. P. Davis, *The Union Pacific Railway*, pp. 67-68.

headed men in the world of Beriah Sellers who knew how easy it was to overreach the simple, and it was they who got most from the common pot. We may call them buccaneers if we choose, and speak of the great barbecue as a democratic debauch. But why single out a few, when all were drunk? Whisky was plentiful at barbecues, and if too liberal potations brought the Gilded Age to the grossest extravagancies, if when it cast up accounts it found its patrimony gone, it was only repeating the experience of a certain man who went down to Jericho. To create a social civilization requires sober heads, and in this carousal of economic romanticism sober heads were few—the good Samaritan was busy elsewhere.

The doctrine of preëmption and exploitation was reaping its harvest. The frontier spirit was having its splurge, and progress was already turning its face in another direction. Within the next half-century this picturesque America with its heritage of crude energy—greedy, lawless, capable—was to be transformed into a vast uniform middle-class land, dedicated to capitalism and creating the greatest machine-order known to history. A scattered agricultural people, steeped in particularistic jealousies and suspicious of centralization, was to be transformed into an urbanized factory people, rootless, migratory, drawn to the job as by a magnet. It was to come about the more easily because the American farmer had never been a land-loving peasant, rooted to the soil and thriving only in daily contact with familiar acres. He had long been half middle-class, accounting unearned increment the most profitable crop, and buying and selling land as if it were calico. And in consequence the vigorous individualism that had sprung from frontier conditions decayed with the passing of the frontier, and those who had lost in the gamble of preemption and exploitation were added to the growing multitude of the proletariat. It was from such materials, supplemented by a vast influx of immigrants, that was fashioned the America we know today with its standardized life, its machine culture, its mass psychology—an America to which Jefferson and Jackson and Lincoln would be strangers.

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T. HARRY WILLIAMS

THE PASSING years have seen a deepening of understanding of the Reconstruction period. But added penetration has revealed new complexities in the subject matter, and historians have as much difficulty as ever in agreeing upon the facts and their meaning. Sectional biases have declined in intensity, but equally compulsive ideologies have taken their place.

The first historical accounts of the Reconstruction period were animated by the same passions which had accompanied the Civil War. The Northerners were certain that Congressional policy was wise and just; southern writers attacked the same policy as vindictive and unconstitutional. These partisan interpretations gradually lessened as the memory of the war receded and its participants died of old age. By the turn of the century, William A. Dunning began to establish at Columbia University a school of Northern scholars who could deal sympathetically with the South.

Dunning's pioneer work is notable not only because of its reappraisal of Northern leadership but also because of its attempt to place Reconstruction politics in a broader context. Forward-looking in conception and conciliatory in mood, his work was sufficiently attractive to dominate Reconstruction scholarship for several decades and to establish an interpretative norm.

However, this unity gradually disappeared. Criticisms of Dunning multiplied as a new generation of "revisionists" began a re-examination of every phase of postwar culture. His effort

to furnish a national economic background for Southern Reconstruction was condemned as superficial and inadequate. Some scholars suggested that in breaking through the cobweb of Northern prejudice, Dunning had made assumptions involving another kind of distortion—the idea of the racial inferiority of Negroes. Indeed, it has been argued that he did not arrive at an essentially new interpretation but had simply accepted the Southern position.

Despite these attacks, the influence of Dunning has continued, and many scholars continue to share his point of view, emphasizing the evils of "Radical Reconstruction." His critics have usually been more sympathetic to the actions of Congress, although the degree of approbation has varied greatly. At the extreme left are the historians who applaud what was done but do not think that the federal government was radical enough. There is a middle stand which finds merit in some of the Reconstruction legislation, yet condemns the use of military means to enforce it.

These brief remarks scarcely suggest, let alone summarize, the variety and the heat which characterize the current investigation of this difficult subject. In the article that follows, T. Harry Williams has reviewed many of the recent trends in interpretation, and skillfully compared the differences among them. Much of the material he discusses first appeared in journals which are relatively inaccessible to the student. In addition, Williams offers some penetrating suggestions in the still undeveloped field of the motivations of significant groups in the Reconstruction drama. Although the motives of Northern politicians and influential businessmen have been examined, relatively little attention has been given to the reasoning of the planters, the middle-class whites, and the Negroes, whose votes were so important in determining the direction of Southern government.

If Williams and the scholars whose work he describes have

raised more problems than they have solved, they have at least gathered sufficient evidence to destroy the familiar stereotypes and to indicate the main lines upon which a more accurate picture of the Reconstruction period must be drawn.

An Analysis of Some Reconstruction Attitudes

IN LATE YEARS revisionist historians have done much to correct the existing and often distorted picture of the Reconstruction period in American history. Earlier writers on Reconstruction, whether they were Republican politicians or southern polemicists, journalists, or historians, exhibited a number of historical deficiencies, but in general it may be said that they told a story that was too simple and naïve. It was simple in that the terrible complexities of Reconstruction were presented in the easy terms of stereotypes—the good white Southern Democrats fighting against the bad colored Republicans and their insidious northern allies, or vice versa. It was naïve in that virtually no analysis was made to explain why people acted as they did. Thus carpetbaggers were dishonest because they were bad men or Republicans, but no attempt was made to describe the forces which contributed to their dishonesty. The revisionists have forced several modifications in the Reconstruction story. They have demonstrated, among other things, that the corruption of the Reconstruction state governments has been exaggerated and that in any case corruption was a national, not a purely southern, phenomenon, with an expanding capitalism as the chief corrupting agent; that Democrats were quite as willing as Republicans to be bought by business; that the supposed astronomically high appropriations of the Reconstruction governments seem so only in

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comparison with the niggardly budgets of the planter-controlled governments of the ante-bellum period; that although the Reconstruction governments were corrupt and dishonest, they must be credited with definite progress in the fields of popular education and internal improvements; and that the national reconstruction program was radical only in a superficial sense in that it gave political power to the Negro but failed to provide economic power through the promised confiscation and ownership of land, and thus that because the position of the Negro had no lasting basis his rule was easily overthrown.¹

These new viewpoints have provided a desirable balance and proportion to the traditional historical treatment of Reconstruction. Still debated and in part unexplored in research are the motives of the northern and southern people during this period. Who supported Reconstruction and why; and who opposed it, and why? In analyzing the motivation of Reconstruction, historians have devoted most of their attention to northern political and economic groups and have produced certain conclusions which have been generally accepted. What may be termed the Beale thesis, because it has been most competently developed by Professor Howard K. Beale, offers a sectional-class explanation of Reconstruction. According to this thesis, Reconstruction was a successful attempt by northeastern business, acting through the Republican party, to control the national government for its own economic ends: notably, the protective tariff, the national banks, a "sound" currency. To accomplish its program, the business class had to overthrow from the seats of power the old ruling agrarian class of the South and West. This it did by inaugurating Reconstruction, which made the South Republican, and by selling its policies to the voters wrapped up in such attractive vote-getting packages as northern patriotism or the bloody

¹ Francis B. Simkins, "New Viewpoints of Southern Reconstruction," in *Journal of Southern History* (Baton Rouge, 1935-), V (1939), 49-61; Howard K. Beale, "On Rewriting Reconstruction History," in *American Historical Review* (New York, 1895-), XLV (1940), 807-27; Horace Mann Bond, "Social and Economic Forces in Alabama Reconstruction," in *Journal of Negro History* (Washington, 1916-), XXIII (1938), 290-348. These writers do two things that so many writers on the subject have not done: they treat Reconstruction as a national development rather than as something happening in an insulated South, and they relate it to southern forces before and after Reconstruction.

shirt.² Another student of the period, while accepting the Beale thesis, points out that northern business men supported Reconstruction not only because of national issues but also because they thought it would enable them to exploit the South through protected capital investments, and that Republican bosses supported Reconstruction because they believed that if the South could be made Republican they could stay in power.³

The Negro author, W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, conceding the part played by industry in formulating the Reconstruction program, contends that there was in the North a substantial mass opinion of liberal idealism, which he calls "abolition-democracy," that stood for a democratic reconstruction plan, including equal rights for Negroes. This group, he insists, represented in politics by men like Thaddeus Stevens, was equally influential with business in determining the nature of Reconstruction.⁴ The existence of such a body of opinion cannot be disputed. That it was as extensive as Du Bois thinks or that it was animated by as much idealism for the Negro may well be doubted; unfortunately there is no way to document accurately its numbers or influence. One thing is certain. The leaders of abolition-democracy did not succeed in incorporating their ideas into the Republican reconstruction scheme. They demanded universal suffrage, universal amnesty, and confiscation of the land of rich Southerners and its distribution among the freedmen. The Republican politicians, being economic reactionaries, discarded confiscation because they had no interest in bringing about a social revolution, and they rejected universal amnesty because it would

² Howard K. Beale, *The Critical Year: A Study of Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (New York: 1930), 1, 8, 115, 143-45; Beale, "On Rewriting Reconstruction History," *loc. cit.*, 813.

³ William B. Hesseltine, "Economic Factors in the Abandonment of Reconstruction," in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (Cedar Rapids, 1914-), XXII (1935), 191-210. See also, Hesseltine, *The South in American History* (New York, 1943), 488-89.

⁴ W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction: An Essay toward a History of the Part which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880* (New York, 1938), 182, 185-87. Beale, in his article, "On Rewriting Reconstruction History," *loc. cit.*, 818-19, admitted that there were minority elements of democratic idealism in the Republican party and that Stevens and Charles Sumner were representatives of these elements. For the contrary view that Stevens thought solely in terms of power for his class and party, see Richard N. Current, *Old Thad Stevens: A Story of Ambition* (Madison, 1942).

have made a Republican South improbable. It would seem that the party bosses, instead of being influenced to any considerable degree by abolition-democracy, used it for whatever it was worth to marshal support for a program designed to benefit a plutocratic minority.

An interpretation of northern motivation that differs in part from both Beale and Du Bois has come from Marxist historians and writers.⁵ The Marxian thesis has been elaborately presented by James S. Allen,⁶ who regards Reconstruction as a plan formulated and carried through by big business to enable it to dominate the nation. Up to a point, this is only the Beale thesis dressed up in Marxian jargon. Allen, however, proceeds to advance the claim that the business program was "democratic," because industry, in achieving power, smashed the old, feudal planter class of the South and thus helped prepare the way for the coming of the industrial state which, after business itself was smashed, would evolve into a perfect democracy of the Marxist variety.⁷ In recent years writers of Marxist persuasion have dropped Allen's emphasis on the class struggle, and have presented Reconstruction as a straight-out plan of equalitarian democracy. The new departure has been most strikingly expressed, in fictional form, by Howard Fast, who flatly states that the Reconstruction acts of 1867 were intended "to create a new democracy in the South."⁸ The Marxian thesis in any of these forms has little validity. No amount of historical legerdemain can transform the economic reactionaries of the Republican party into great liberals or make the protective tariff and the gold standard into items of the democratic faith. Furthermore, as will be shown, the Marxists are wrong when they try to develop the corollary that Reconstruction was also a democratic process in the South.⁹

⁵ The term Marxist is here applied to those writers who frankly state that they are interpreting history according to the laws and predictions of Karl Marx and to those who without acknowledging Marx write history that conforms to the Marxian pattern.

⁶ James S. Allen, *Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy, 1865-1867* (New York, 1937).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 18, 22, 81, 89.

⁸ Howard Fast, *Freedom Road* (New York, 1944), 71.

⁹ It is significant that those Negroes who envisioned Reconstruction as a real social revolution for their people saw little idealism in the Republican party. Thus the New Orleans *Tribune*, a Negro newspaper, said: "The Republican party of the North was not formed upon the true basis of justice and equality, as the history of abolition and slavery plainly shows; and it has only the right to

The sectional-class thesis of Beale would seem to be the most nearly correct analysis of northern motivation, although Beale did not fully explain how northeastern business persuaded agrarian Republicans from the Middle West to support industrial measures and a reconstruction policy designed to insure the rule of business in the South. It has since been demonstrated that this was done in part by giving the Middle West exceptionally generous appropriations for internal improvements and in effect buying its support;¹⁰ and to this should be added such other inducements as free land, pensions, and railroads, as well as such emotional and psychological appeals as habitual use of the bloody shirt. Du Bois was also undoubtedly correct in contending that idealistic forces played a part in shaping reconstruction policy, and his point is a good, although minor, corrective to the purely economic analysis. But the major fact remains that the men who made Reconstruction were moved by issues of economic and political power far more than by democratic idealism.

While the question of northern motivation has been fairly well established, there has been little attempt to prepare a systematic analysis of southern attitudes toward Reconstruction. Most of the professional historians writing on southern reconstruction have been members of or followers of the so-called Dunning school. They are largely responsible for the familiar stereotypes of Reconstruction. According to their interpretation, Reconstruction was a battle between two extremes: the Democrats, as the group which included the vast majority of the whites, standing for decent government and racial supremacy, versus the Republicans, the Negroes, alien carpet-baggers, and renegade scalawags, standing for dishonest government and alien ideals. These historians wrote literally in terms of white and black. This is not to say that they did not recognize the fact that there were differences between Southerners on such issues as

claim credit for having abolished slavery as a political necessity and of having given the ballot to the black men as an arm of defence to the loyal white men. Emergency, nay necessity, had more to do with the abolition of slavery and the passage of the Military Bill than had philanthropy and love for the negro." Quoted in *New Orleans Times*, July 4, 1873.

¹⁰ Helen J. and T. Harry Williams, "Wisconsin Republicans and Reconstruction, 1865-1870," in *Wisconsin Magazine of History* (Madison, 1917-), XXIII (1939), 17-39.

Negro suffrage. But they explained the differences in terms of individual motivation. Thus Southerners who advocated the vote for Negroes were either bad men, or wartime Unionists who hated "rebels," or kindly planters who knew Negroes well and wanted to control their votes in the right direction. Although the Dunning writers sensed an apparent disagreement between the planter-business class and the small farmers on the Negro question, with the planters being willing to accept a position of greater equality for the Negro, they did not explore the difference or try to ascertain whether there were economic and social causes for its existence.¹¹

No such reluctance characterizes Du Bois. He boldly proclaims that Reconstruction was a labor movement, an attempt by the white and black proletariat to control the South, "a vision of democracy across racial lines."¹² A basic error invalidates most of his thesis. There was no white proletariat of any significant numbers; the great mass of the whites were yeoman farmers who thought in terms of racial supremacy instead of class solidarity. Furthermore, he exaggerates the readiness of the former non-slaveholding whites to unite with the Negroes. He himself recognizes that there are factual weaknesses in his theory. He knows that the common whites furnished the power by which the Republican state governments were overthrown; but he explains this disturbing fact by claiming that the planters cut off the developing interracial co-operation of the proletariat by appealing to the prejudices of the poorer whites and organizing them on the color line.¹³ Closely paralleling Du Bois' interpretation, and even going beyond it, is that of the Marxists.

¹¹ The views of the Dunning school are in William A. Dunning, *Reconstruction: Political and Economic, 1865-1877* (New York, 1907), especially pp. 116-17, 213; Walter L. Fleming, *The Sequel of Appomattox: A Chronicle of the Reunion of the States* (New Haven, 1921), especially pp. 47-48, 50-52, 87-88. These criticisms of Dunning and Fleming are not made in any carping spirit. It is recognized that they and other members of the Dunning school were pioneers in the study of Reconstruction and made important factual contributions to its history. It should also be noted that Fleming was aware that many planters were for Negro suffrage and that most farmers were against it. See his *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama* (New York: 1905), 387-88. But he ascribed the planters' attitude merely to a desire to control the Negro vote in order to maintain their power in the legislature.

¹² Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 346-47, 350.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 130-31. These criticisms of Du Bois do not detract from the fact that his book was a valuable contribution to Reconstruction history. In some respects he got closer to the truth of Reconstruction than any other writer.

They, too, present Reconstruction as a biracial movement of the laboring class which was finally destroyed by a counter-revolution of the planters.¹⁴ According to Howard Fast, the Negroes and poor whites joined hands in the Republican party and created "a fine, a just, and a truly democratic civilization," but the reactionary planter class refused to permit this experiment in social democracy and wiped it out with force.¹⁵ That the validity of such assertions is open to serious question can be shown by examining the attitude of the planters and business men in Louisiana toward Reconstruction and the Negro and placing the results in the larger setting of what is known about the general attitudes of the southern whites in other parts of the region.

First of all, despite the opinions of the Marxists, the overwhelming mass of the people—the yeoman farmers, middle class whites, and poor whites—were fiercely opposed to Negro suffrage and to any condition of equality for the Negro. The evidence on this point, while not voluminous because of the general inarticulateness of the common whites, is strong; it is best expressed by the fact that the small-farmer, white-belt areas of the southern states voted heavily against Republicans and Republican measures in election after election.¹⁶ As Horace Mann Bond puts it, the farmers hated equally slavery, planters, and Negroes.¹⁷ The attitude of the common whites of Reconstruction is consonant with the known attitude of the poorest whites, economically, today; that is, racial antipathy toward Negroes is always sharpest when accentuated by economic competition. The teachings of social psychology can be adduced to support the generalization concerning the reaction of the whites. In a caste

¹⁴ Allen, *Reconstruction*, 111-15, 126, 183-84, 193. On different pages Allen states that a significant portion of the common whites joined the Republican party and again that practically all of them did. The book as a whole gives the impression that the poorer whites as a class became Republicans.

¹⁵ Fast, *Freedom Road*, 263.

¹⁶ Paul Lewinson, *Race, Class, and Party: A History of Negro Suffrage in the South* (New York, 1932), 23, 37, 52; Roger W. Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana: A Social History of White Farmers and Laborers during Slavery and After, 1840-1875* (Baton Rouge, 1939), 230; Hesseltine, *South in American History*, 485; Dunning, *Reconstruction*, 213; Fleming, *Sequel of Appomattox*, 47-48, 50, 87-88; Fleming, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama*, 387-88.

¹⁷ Bond, "Social and Economic Factors in Alabama Reconstruction," *loc. cit.*, 294-95. Bond finds that at the beginning of Reconstruction there was some political co-operation between poor whites and Negroes.

system based on a fixed status for groups, any attempt by a subordinated element—in this case the Negroes—to achieve a higher status unlooses feelings of tension and fear in the next higher group, which will exert itself, often violently, to keep the subordinated group down.¹⁸

The most powerful group in the South was the planter-business class and its professional allies; its position on Reconstruction was of decisive importance. In the beginning days of Reconstruction, the planters and business men strongly opposed the central proposal of the Radical Republican program—suffrage for the Negro. But they opposed it for economic rather than racial reasons. This fact is crucially important in understanding their reactions. To use modern terms, they feared that the grant of the ballot to the Negro would add to the strength of the liberal or progressive vote. This is not to say that they did not regard the Negro as an inferior being of an entirely separate race. But it is to say that they reacted to a proposal to enfranchise a laboring class as would any propertied minority in any society—they opposed it because they believed it would lead to an attack upon property.¹⁹ A few quotations selected from many statements appearing in conservative New Orleans newspapers which were spokesmen of the planter-business interests will demonstrate the point. Terming universal suffrage a menace to property, the New Orleans *Times* said: "The right to vote should be given to those only who can use it with discretion and sound judgment, and as our electoral privileges are already too wide, it would be the maddest folly to extend them at once to a class who have always been under control, and who—without the ability to form a correct judgment for themselves—would be left to the tender mercies of party tricksters." Let the Negro wait until he acquired property be-

¹⁸ Kimball Young, *Social Psychology* (New York, 1944), 262-63, 269.

¹⁹ There was logic in this position. Many of the Negro leaders were exponents of radical agrarianism. Said the New Orleans *Tribune*: "There is no more room in the organization of our society, for an oligarchy of slaveholders, or property holders"; and again, "There is in fact, no true republican government, unless the land, and wealth in general, are distributed among the great mass of the inhabitants." Quoted in Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 458-59. This agrarianism never secured any significant victories because the carpetbaggers, scalawags, and professional Negro politicians, interested mainly in corruption and power, choked it off. See Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana*, 243-44.

fore he became a voter.²⁰ In a fuller and more philosophical exposition of its views, the *Times* stated:

Wherever voters greatly outnumber property holders, property will assuredly be unsafe. When voters have property and intelligence, there is some hope that they may "find their interest in the interest of the community" and be anxious to secure a consistent, honest, economical and straight-forward administration. But the selfish interest of the non-property holding voter lies in an altogether different direction. He wishes to secure rich pickings, and, too frequently, soils his fingers by base bribes. Were universal negro suffrage to be added to the white universal suffrage now existing in the South, the security of both life and property would be greatly weakened. . . . With our present too widely extended suffrage it is difficult even now to steer between the rocks of the political Scylla and the whirlpool of its Charybdis, and with universal negro suffrage added, the task would be wholly hopeless.²¹

Becoming frankly specific, the *Times* later declared that "If representative institutions are to be preserved in this country, the control of taxes must be left to those who pay them, and the protection of property to those who own it."²² The New Orleans *Crescent*, endorsing the proposal of South Carolina's planter leader, Wade Hampton, to extend the vote to Negroes who had acquired property and an education,²³ asserted: "Southern conservatives ask nothing more on the subject of suffrage than that its distribution shall be determined by the test of character and intelligence. They have asked for nothing more from the time that, by one of the irreversible results of war, the Southern negroes became a part of the free population of the country. It is not their fault if such a test has been rejected in favor of another that proscribes a large proportion of the highest intelligence on the one hand, and opens all political functions to the maximum of ignorance on the other."²⁴ Expressing the conserva-

²⁰ New Orleans *Times*, August 13, 1865.

²¹ *Ibid.*, December 24, 1866.

²² *Ibid.*, February 2, 1868. There are similar statements in the issues of November 26, 30, 1866, January 26, 1867.

²³ Hampton, Alexander H. Stephens, Benjamin F. Perry, and other leaders had suggested a limited Negro suffrage based on property and education, thus permitting only those Negroes to vote who were conscious of property rights. Hampton believed the planters could easily control such voters. Lewinson, *Race, Class, and Party*, 37-39; Fleming, *Sequel of Appomattox*, 50-52.

²⁴ New Orleans *Crescent*, October 23, 1867.

tives' fear of the economic implications of Negro suffrage, the *Crescent* said: "It seems to be practically absurd and dangerous to commit the decisions of those difficult questions to numbers of extemporized citizens incapable of forming any accurate or rational opinions; and likely to imagine that the right to vote means the right to live without work, and to rob the industrious classes for the benefit of the idle and thriftless."²⁵ The *Picayune* denounced Negro suffrage because it did not believe that common men of any color should vote; manhood suffrage was "the unlimited suffrage of the ignorant, landless and lawless."²⁶ "We look upon it [voting] as a duty rather than a right," said the *Picayune*, "and regret that there is so much of it among the whites."²⁷ To the *Picayune*, Reconstruction was a process that proscribed "intelligence, probity and property" and elevated propertyless nobodies to power.²⁸

To the testimony of conservative newspapers can be added representative statements of conservative planter-business leaders. In 1867, when Congress was considering the radical reconstruction acts, various southern newspapers asked prominent individuals to give their reactions to the proposed measures. More frank and philosophical than most was J. W. Robb of Mississippi. He warned conservatives that all republics in history had fallen when they had extended the ballot to a laboring class, "an ignorant horde of stupid and besotted men." "I believe," he continued, "that from the introduction of negro suffrage, the worst form and spirit of agrarianism will arise to disturb the peace and order of the State, and that it will require our utmost exertions to keep it down, and retain for ourselves political existence and individual security."²⁹ Francis T. Nicholls, who became governor of Louisiana in 1877 when white supremacy supposedly was restored, told a Congressional committee that conservatives were opposed to Reconstruction because it had endangered property interests by placing ignorance in power. Before Reconstruction, he said, there had been a relatively small group of ignorant white voters whom the rich could control, but Reconstruc-

²⁵ *Ibid.*, May 14, 1868.

²⁶ New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, May 10, 1868.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, May 23, 1868.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, May 24, 1868.

²⁹ J. W. Robb, in Jackson *Clarion*, March 19, 1868, quoted in New Orleans *Times*, March 22.

tion had made ignorance "the dominating power." He favored a law that in the interest of property would disfranchise the ignorant of both races.³⁰

Congress ignored the opposition to Negro suffrage of the planter-business class, based primarily on economic grounds, and of the common whites, based primarily on racial grounds. In 1867 it passed the reconstruction laws of the Radical Republicans; and Negro suffrage and, in many states, Negro rule became a reality. There followed a period of years, varying in different states, in which the Republican party, led by white carpetbaggers and scalawags and composed predominantly of the Negro masses, controlled the South. The political record of its rule was a compound of blatant corruption and forward social legislation. It was an expensive program. Money was needed to gratify the desires of the white and colored politicians for graft and of the colored masses for social services furnished by the state. The Republicans had to resort to higher and higher taxation, and necessarily they laid the heaviest taxes upon real property. While taxation affected all property holders, large and small, the brunt of it fell upon the large holders. This, as Du Bois points out, is a crucial fact in Reconstruction history—a war-impooverished propertied class was being compelled by the votes of poor men to bear an almost confiscatory tax burden.³¹

Faced with extinction by taxation, the planter-business class reacted again and characteristically in economic rather than racial terms. Negro votes had imposed the tax burden. Negro votes could lift it. If in order to persuade the Negroes to do so it was necessary to grant them political and civil equality or even to let them run the state, well and good. Get the tax rate down, cried one New Orleans conservative, "even if every office in the State, from Governor to the most insignificant constable, were filled by a negro."³² Urged another: "We must get rid of party hacks and political jobbers, and satisfy the reasonable demands of the negroes. This accomplished, Louisiana will again blossom as the rose. It is our only salvation."³³ A prominent merchant declared: "I am in favor, in case we ever have another election, of giving to the colored

³⁰ *House Reports*, 43 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 261, Part 3, pp. 646-47.

³¹ Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 590-91.

³² Letter of Archibald Mitchell, in *New Orleans Picayune*, June 18, 1873.

³³ *New Orleans Times*, May 29, 1873.

people the bulk of the lucrative positions. . . . I am not afraid that they will, in any considerable degree abuse their privileges, and, for ourselves, we want nothing but peaceful government."³⁴ "You want civil equality; you shall have it," a leading business man pledged the Negroes, "if you forsake the Northern adventurer who has plundered poor Louisiana until she is penniless."³⁵ On with political cooperation with Negroes, exclaimed a property holder, "for God's sake if it will give us an honest government; our present lot is insupportable."³⁶ A blunt Natchitoches planter asserted that it was imperative that the whites detach the Negroes from the Republicans: "When the war was over we wouldn't have anything to do with the niggers, and let the Radicals gobble them up. . . . I am in favor of anything to get them. Drop the name of Democracy, I say, and go in for the niggers."³⁷

What practical political action did the planter-business class take during Reconstruction to protect itself from excessive taxation and to foster its economic interests? In local elections in New Orleans, for example, the business men contemplated putting up Negro candidates for Congressional and city offices to compete with white Republicans. On Carondelet Street, the city's great business center, it was planned to nominate a colored foreman of one of the leading cotton presses for Congress. Such a man, asserted the business reporter of the *New Orleans Times*, "Will protect and do more for the South than any white Radical which can be selected to run against him. Carondelet street will go for the gentlemen with the cotton press."³⁸ The business men, this journalist explained, "are taking an unusual interest in being represented in Congress by a representative born in the South. The nearer approach to a real African, black in color, the more confidence will be placed in him."³⁹ Since the records do not show that the Carondelet magnates got their foreman nominated, it is probable that the Democratic leaders in New Orleans refused to take a Negro candidate, or even

³⁴ *Ibid.*, May 30, 1873.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, June 6, 1873.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, June 23, 1873.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, June 9, 1873.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, August 13, 1867. "On 'Change" column. The business columns of the newspapers contain much information about the activities of business men in Reconstruction. Historians have overlooked this important source.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, August 17, 1867. See also issue of September 5.

more probable that the cotton press gentleman, if he had political ambitions and an eye for the future, became a Republican. Regardless of the outcome, however, the episode demonstrated that these hardheaded business men placed their economic interests above racial differences and that they preferred to entrust those interests to an understanding and amenable Negro rather than to an untried white.

A second device adopted by the conservatives was to enter the Republican party and seek to control it. A recent study by David H. Donald illustrates how this was done in Mississippi.⁴⁰ After Radical Reconstruction went into effect most of the former Whigs, in antebellum times the party of the big slaveholders, became Republicans. "Such action is not hard to understand," writes Donald. "The Whigs were wealthy men—the large planters and the railroad and industrial promoters—who naturally turned to the party which in the state as in the nation was dominated by business interests."⁴¹ At first these planters, or scalawags, to use a familiar term, dominated the party, but they lost their leadership to the carpetbaggers who, in the struggles for power within the party, were willing to promise more to the Negroes. Donald points to the planters' fruitless opposition to the Republican program of big budgets and high taxes and their revulsion against the social equality claimed by the Negroes as sources of their difficulties. Finally, repudiated by people they could not control, they drifted "slowly and reluctantly over to the Democratic camp."⁴²

Still a third device employed by the planters and business men was to invite the Negroes to leave the Republicans and join with them in a new political organization separate from the Democratic party. The conservatives promised in such case to respect the Negro's civil equality and his right to vote and to hold office. Such movements were tried in several states,⁴³ the most elaborate being

⁴⁰ David H. Donald, "The Scalawag in Mississippi Reconstruction," in *Journal of Southern History*, X (1944), 447-60.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 449-50.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 453-55.

⁴³ Francis B. Simpkins and Robert H. Woody, *South Carolina during Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill, 1932), 447-54; Alrutheus A. Taylor, *The Negro in South Carolina during the Reconstruction* (Washington, 1924), 195-97; John S. Reynolds, *Reconstruction in South Carolina, 1865-1877* (Columbia, 1905), 139-43; James W. Garner, *Reconstruction in Mississippi* (New York, 1901), 238-43.

the so-called "Louisiana Unification Movement."⁴⁴ Inaugurated in 1873, this movement was headed by General Pierre G. T. Beauregard and was supported by the flower of the wealth and culture of New Orleans and South Louisiana.⁴⁵ Its platform advocated complete political equality for the Negro, an equal division of state offices between the races, and a plan whereby Negroes would become landowners. The unifiers denounced discrimination because of color in hiring laborers or in selecting directors of corporations, and called for the abandonment of segregation in public conveyances, public places, railroads, steamboats, and the public schools.⁴⁶ The Louisiana movement, like the others, failed for lack of support from the white masses. The unification program was popular in New Orleans and in the plantation belt of South Louisiana, but in the small-farmer areas of other parts of the state it was received with loathing and execration.

It is evident that a basis existed for an alliance of the planter-business class and the Negroes. "If they [the planters] had wished," writes Du Bois, "they could have held the Negro vote in the palm of their hands."⁴⁷ Why did such an alliance fail to materialize? In the first place, the leaders of the unification movements could not persuade any significant number of whites to support the concessions which the planters were willing to accord the colored people. The common whites, animated by racial motives, refused to follow planter leadership, and without any mass white support the unification movements could not succeed. In Louisiana the movement failed to develop much mass support even from the Negroes

⁴⁴ T. Harry Williams, "The Louisiana Unification Movement of 1873," in *Journal of Southern History*, XI (1945), 349-69.

⁴⁵ Beauregard believed that in the long run Negro suffrage would increase the political power of the South. The whites could control the Negroes "with a little education and some property qualifications" and "defeat our adversaries with their own weapon." Quoted in *New York Tribune*, April 1, 1867. For other expressions of a similar view, see *ibid.*, April 4, 1867, quoting *Mobile Tribune* and *Wilmington (N. C.) Dispatch*.

⁴⁶ Williams, "Louisiana Unification Movement," *loc. cit.*, 359-61. It is to be noted that rich whites could ask for the destruction of segregation without having to encounter many of the results of non-segregation. This was particularly true in education. As a North Louisiana newspaper pointed out, the rich sent their children to private white schools; the poorer whites had to send theirs to public schools which the rich proposed to make biracial. *Shreveport Times*, quoted in *Monroe Ouachita Telegraph*, June 28, 1873.

⁴⁷ Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 611.

because professional Negro politicians, secure in their place in the Republican party, advised their followers to shun co-operation and because those Negro leaders who favored co-operation could not suppress their suspicion of the sincerity of the planter-business class. "We know that, by an alliance with you, we can have more privileges than we now enjoy," one Negro spokesman told the conservatives. "We will not then have to cling to the carpet-baggers for protection, but can ourselves take whatever share of office and representation falls to us fairly. Still, we have *some* rights now, and we don't intend to give them up. Rather than do that, we will cling to the carpet-bagger forever, and let him share our power."⁴⁸

In the second place, the planters and business men, while willing to make far-reaching concessions to the Negroes, did not make them because they believed in the principles of racial equality. They made them because of pressing economic reasons and because they wanted to control the Negro vote. They never ceased to regard the Negroes as inferior creatures who by an unfortunate turn of fate had become politically powerful in the state. Hence there was a limit to their concessions, its line marked by anything that seemed to suggest social equality. The carpetbaggers, unhampered by such reservations, could always outbid the conservatives. Thus in states like Mississippi, where the planter tried to dominate the Republican party, the carpetbaggers took the leadership of the Negroes away from the scalawags. Finally, the differing economic aspirations of the wealthy whites and the Negroes prevented any lasting alliance of the two. The Negroes demanded a program of social services financed by the state, which meant high taxes. The planters wanted to control the colored vote in order to reduce these services and lower taxes which they considered almost confiscatory. The Negroes wanted higher wages and shorter hours; the planters wanted a serf-like system of sharecropping. The planter simply lacked the capital to finance the Negro's social or labor program;⁴⁹ but in view of the obvious conflict between the desires of the two groups it is doubtful whether such a program would have received support from the

⁴⁸ New Orleans *Times*, May 28, 1873

⁴⁹ This point is well developed in Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 611-12.

planters even if they had possessed the necessary means for financing it.

And so the planters and business men, unable to prevent the establishment of Negro suffrage and unable to control it after it was established, joined with the common whites to overthrow the Republican state governments. By 1877 the Democrats controlled every southern state, and what the textbooks call white supremacy was restored. Actually, Negroes continued to vote, although in reduced numbers, and white supremacy was not restored until the 1890's. As Professor C. Vann Woodward has ably demonstrated, the men who came to power after Reconstruction were not in the old agrarian, planter tradition. They were often of the planter class, but in reality they were industrialists or would-be industrialists. They preached the industrialization of the South through the importation of Yankee capital, a policy of low taxes to attract business, and a political alliance with the Northeast instead of with the South's traditional ally, the West.⁵⁰ These men reacted to Negro suffrage as had men of their class during Reconstruction. As the vote of labor, it was something to be feared and kept in hand, but as the vote of an inferior people, it was also something that might be manipulated for the benefit of the wealthy. As events developed, the bosses of the New South sometimes found that they could use the colored vote to beat down attempts of the farmers to take over control of the Democratic party. In the election of 1880 in Georgia, for example, the rich defeated the farmers through a combination of a minority of the white votes and a majority of the colored ones.⁵¹ The southern champions of industrialism, therefore, took no

⁵⁰ C. Vann Woodward, *Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel* (New York, 1938), 58-72. For similar developments in other states, see Francis B. Simkins, *Pitchfork Ben Tillman, South Carolinian* (Baton Rouge, 1944), 79-80; Willie D. Halsell, "The Bourbon Period in Mississippi Politics, 1875-1890," in *Journal of Southern History*, XI (1945), 519-37.

⁵¹ Woodward, *Tom Watson*, 80-81; Judson C. Ward, "The Republican Party in Bourbon Georgia, 1872-1890," in *Journal of Southern History*, IX (1943), 200. See, also, Simkins, *Pitchfork Ben Tillman*, 164, 167. The planters also employed the Negro vote against the Republicans. In 1884 Edward Gay, Democrat, was running for Congress from a South Louisiana district against Republican William P. Kellogg. Edward N. Pugh, Democratic leader of Ascension Parish, outlined for the sugar planters methods of swinging the colored vote behind Gay. Let owners and managers tell the Negro workers to vote for Gay, he advised: "They naturally receive with deference the expression of opinion by their employers on

action to disfranchise the Negro; they used him to maintain the supremacy of a few white men over other white men. Disfranchisement finally came as a result of the efforts of small-farmer leaders like Ben Tillman.⁵²

Placed in the general setting, therefore, the interests and activities of the Louisiana planter-capitalist group serve to confirm the fact that the Reconstruction period was one of the most complex in American history. It witnessed the ending of a great civil struggle and the travail of postwar adjustment, the consummation of a momentous economic revolution, and a wrenching change in race relations. No less complex than the times were the motives that impelled people—northern and southern, white and black, rich and poor—to act as they did. No simple or generic explanation cast in the form of sectional stereotypes will supply the key to what happened. Economic, social, and political stimuli affected groups in the South in different ways, and Southerners differed among themselves on the issues of Reconstruction in about the same degree as did groups in the North. The planter-capitalist class of the South thought and acted in terms of economic self-interest in a fashion similar to the industrial magnates of the North. The important difference was that the business men carried the northern people with them while the planters were unable to convince the white masses in the South that economics transcended racial supremacy.

all subjects. . . . Nearly all the leading colored men are with us and they need only the offer of substantial moral support from the employers to swell the number of the supporters of Mr. Gay from the ranks of the colored employees." Edward N. Pugh to William Porcher Miles, October 30, 1884, in W. P. Miles Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina).

⁵² Although the impetus for disfranchisement generally came from farmer leaders, the rich whites acquiesced in the movement. They did so partly out of a desire to placate the white masses and partly because the farmers, particularly during the agrarian unrest of the 1890's, sometimes tried to vote the Negroes on their side. The competition for the colored vote frightened many whites and forced the wealthy whites to pay out large monetary sums to retain their Negro supporters. Undoubtedly the planter-business class saw in disfranchisement a chance to eliminate a purchasable vote that was steadily becoming more expensive. See George M. Reynolds, *Machine Politics in New Orleans, 1897-1926* (New York, 1936), 21, 26-27, 29-30, 35. "As the situation had developed," writes Reynolds, "it seemed best to take the Negro vote off the market and leave only the white electorate with its comparatively small venal vote to be traded in on election day" (p. 26). For an itemized account of how much it cost the planters in one Louisiana parish to buy Negro votes in the election of 1892, and a complaint about the price, see Henry McCall to William Porcher Miles, May 4, 1892, in Miles Papers.

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PART VI

THE RISE OF
INDUSTRIAL AMERICA

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ALLAN NEVINS

THE UNINITIATED may wonder why today's historians so often find it necessary to write new books on subjects about which so many old books have already been produced. When one surveys the catalogue of a large library, it is difficult to believe that there is any aspect of American history that has not been examined many times over.

Often this rewriting has its origin in the interests of the historian rather than in the discovery of new facts. A reshuffling of the historical records will bring to the top those aspects of the past which have most meaning today. Although this increases the "timeliness" of a work, it may lead to distortion as well. For example, it is possible that the religious motivation of the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay may be too much de-emphasized by current writers who concentrate on the development of our economic institutions or political democracy.

Part of the need for new books results from the fact that the definition of history has gradually broadened. A good deal of today's writing comes as a corrective to studies made at a time when history was considered merely a record of past politics. When historians discovered the necessity for relating political institutions to their economic and social environment, they found that previous writers had done comparatively little to supply a factual basis for such an analysis. A penetrating description of how the average American had lived, what forces motivated him, and how his needs were supplied simply did not exist.

The writing of social history presented special problems which

even now are not completely resolved. Past generations have more often retained records of the outstanding than of the typical. The famous men made an indelible imprint, but the average citizen was consigned to oblivion. While the homes of Washington and Jefferson may be inspected, the rude shacks in which most of their contemporaries lived have disappeared. Even where extant materials are plentiful, there can be no assurance that the part of the past which remains is an accurate reflection of the whole. A proper appraisal requires techniques which are more the equipment of the sociologist than of the historian. Such men as Allan Nevins have made important contributions to the solution of these problems, but the ultimate answers lie in the future.

The first comprehensive effort to meet the need for social histories is contained in a series of thirteen volumes collectively called *A History of American Life*. It was completed, significantly enough, only within the last few years. Nevins' *The Emergence of Modern America*, which appeared in 1927, forms the seventh volume of the series; it concerns itself with the dominant social characteristics of the years immediately following the Civil War.

Nevins' extensive historical writings reflect a career which began in journalism and moved on to the field of academic scholarship. As a former journalist, Nevins has ever been mindful of the need for making history readable and intelligible. But unlike some others who consider it their task to make the presentation of history attractive rather than formidable, lively rather than pedantic, Nevins has not used his emphasis upon readability as an excuse for a superficial knowledge of his subject matter.

Nevins' reputation rests upon two kinds of writing. Twice awarded the Pulitzer Prize for biography, he has achieved lasting recognition for his lives of Grover Cleveland, Hamilton Fish, Abraham Hewitt, John Fremont, and John D. Rockefeller. Although his emphasis is upon the men rather than their times, the specific problems with which his political figures were concerned

receive a detailed analysis. His accounts of businessmen describe in popular terms the industrial progress which helped to determine their course of action.

If Nevins is not associated with any new general theory of historical interpretation, he has shown a special talent for the difficult task of synthesizing the material of countless specialized studies into an understandable whole. *The Emergence of Modern America* displays this ability to give collective significance to thousands of isolated facts. In contrast to Parrington's approach, Nevins' is positive rather than negative; it is concerned with the constructive aspects of these years rather than with the moral deficiencies of the men who participated in them. While this approach does not lead him to omit mention of the unsavory atmosphere of the Grant administration and the criminality of such men as Jim Fiske and Jay Gould, it has been partly responsible for the criticism perhaps most often voiced of Nevins' work: that he has tended to point too favorable a picture of our national past.

Yet if this positivism constitutes a basis for criticism, it is also a source of the insight underlying his contribution. Living in an age of different social values, today's historian has many obstacles in the way of an appreciation of the crude, expansive years after the Civil War. Nevins has succeeded in offering convincing evidence that vulgarity and avariciousness did not preclude constructive achievement.

The Industrial Boom in the North

MEANWHILE the industrial North was pressing forward with a speed which seemed to leave all old landmarks behind and which year by year wrought new social changes. David A. Wells wrote in 1889 that to a generation whose memory covered only the years following 1860, "the recitation of the economic experiences and industrial conditions of the generation next preceding is very much akin to a recurrence to ancient history."¹ Economically the nation of 1865—a nation which had hardly advanced to the Missouri, which used iron alone, which had a modest railway system and but one and a half billion dollars invested in manufacturing—was a world away from the nation of 1878—a nation which had pressed to the Pacific, which was producing huge quantities of steel, which had the finest railway system in the world and which had invested nearly three billions in manufacturing. The impetus behind this stride was at its greatest in the years 1865-1873; Northern industry was booming when the war ended and the boom had eight years to run.

The victorious end of the war and the return of labor from the armies gave increased buoyancy to enterprise in every field. A leading Northern manufacturer, testifying under oath, said that his rate of profit in 1865 had been "painfully large;" and the special commissioner of revenue reported at the end of the following year that the returns of business had been almost unprecedentedly high.² Scarcely a record in industry escaped being broken during the next five years. More cotton spindles were set revolving, more iron furnaces were

From *The Emergence of Modern America* by Allan Nevins, copyright 1927 by The Macmillan Company and used with their permission.

¹ D. A. Wells, *Recent Economic Changes* (N. Y., 1889), 65.

² Special Commissioner of Revenue, *Report* (Dec., 1869). See also *Scientific American*, Sept. 15, 1866: "There are more men in New York today whose annual incomes reach \$100,000 than there were twenty-five years ago of those whose entire possessions amounted to as much."

lighted, more steel was made, more coal and copper were mined, more lumber was sawed and hewed, more houses and shops were constructed and more manufactories of different kinds were established, than during any equal term in our earlier history.³ Moreover, the improvements in the quality of manufactures equaled the increase in quantity.

The high prices which war-time demands and the issue of greenbacks had brought about continued in nearly all markets. The elation of Northern victory, the feeling of recuperative power, the sense of enormous Western wealth waiting only to be unlocked, were reflected in industry. "The truth is," John Sherman wrote his brother in the fall of 1865, "the close of the war with our resources unimpaired gives an elevation, a scope to the ideas of leading capitalists, far higher than anything ever undertaken in this country before. They talk of millions as confidently as formerly of thousands."⁴ Sherman himself thought of leaving politics to engage in railroading, banking or manufacturing in Ohio. The home market was steadily expanding, partly through the inflow of immigrants from Europe, partly through the rapid settlement of the Western prairies. The war had tended to break down the previous economic dependence upon Europe, and behind a high tariff wall a host of new manufactories were making articles formerly shipped from abroad. In 1859 there had been one hundred and forty thousand manufacturing establishments; in 1869 there were two hundred and fifty-two thousand with a commensurate increase in the number of employees.⁵ A succession of foreign wars, beginning with the Austro-Prussian War of 1865-1866 and the coalition of Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay against Paraguay, also benefited American trade.

Although the modern steel age was born in 1856, when Henry Bessemer in England invented his process, it did not gain a real foothold in America for a decade. Till after the Civil War steel was rare and costly, used chiefly in cutlery and fine tools. The demands of the conflict gave manufacturers no taste or time for experimenting, so that not until 1864 was the Bessemer process first used, at a short-lived plant in Wyandotte, Michigan, and even in 1867 only two

³ Special Commissioner of Revenue, *Report* (Jan., 1869).

⁴ John and W. T. Sherman, *Letters* (Rachel S. Thorndike, ed., N. Y., 1894), 258.

⁵ *Abstract of the Census of Manufactures, 1919* (Wash., 1923), 13, table 3.

thousand six hundred tons of steel ingots were produced.⁶ Then, steel making expanded with striking speed. The new process excited the wonder of all who witnessed it: the pouring of the molten iron into a great converter, the dazzling shower of sparks as the air was forced through the incandescent mass and the drawing off of the flaming metal as white-hot steel. The first steel king arose in the person of Captain Eber S. Ward of Detroit, who at the close of the war began making and selling steel under the American patents of William Kelly.⁷ He soon found his chief rival in Alexander M. Holley of Troy, New York, who had bought the Bessemer rights. Since neither could make steel satisfactorily without infringing upon the legal prerogatives of the other, Ward, who was growing old, surrendered his patents to Holley, a dashing young industrialist still in his early thirties, in return for a thirty-per-cent share in the consolidation. Holley thus for a time stepped forth as the leading steel-and-iron maker of America.⁸

Steel speedily became as cheap as cast iron and its cheapness created such a keen demand that by 1875 a dozen important Bessemer works had been established. Before the war the iron business of the nation had been widely diffused, with bloomeries and furnaces scattered from the Adirondacks and Berkshires to Virginia and Tennessee. Now the greatest steel works, including the Cambria Works, which Daniel J. Morrell established in Johnstown (1871), the Bethlehem Works (1873) and the J. Edgar Thomson Steel Works (1875), as Carnegie called his establishment near Pittsburgh, rose in Pennsylvania alone. When the first proposal came to Carnegie to use the Bessemer process, the young ironmaster demurred, saying that "Pioneering doesn't pay a new concern: we must wait until the process develops." But he soon afterwards saw it demonstrated in England, and hurried home to organize the firm of Carnegie, McCandless & Co., to develop the new methods with a capital of seven hundred thousand dollars.⁹ Meanwhile smaller works were flourishing in

⁶ C. D. Wright, *The Industrial Evolution of the United States* (N. Y., 1901), chap. xiv; H. U. Faulkner, *American Economic History* (N. Y., 1924), 574.

⁷ V. S. Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States, 1607-1860* (Carnegie Inst., *Contribs. to Am. Econ. Hist.*, Wash., 1916), 512 ff.

⁸ H. N. Casson, *The Romance of Steel* (N. Y., 1907), 1-60.

⁹ Andrew Carnegie, *Autobiography* (J. C. Van Dyke, ed., Boston, 1920); Casson, *Steel*, 73 ff.

Cleveland, Chicago and St. Louis. The American production of steel rose steadily to three hundred and seventy-five thousand tons in 1875 and nine hundred and twenty-nine thousand in 1879, even the Panic of 1873 producing little visible check. Hard on the heels of the Bessemer process came that of the open hearth, but its progress was slow, for it required more time and the more careful instruction of the steel workers. A Siemens regenerative furnace was installed by John Fritz at the Bethlehem plant in 1872, and about nine thousand tons of open-hearth steel were being made two years later.¹⁰ Thousands of men found work and high wages in the steel plants, producing a commensurate development of the Michigan iron mines.¹¹ But the social importance of steel production lay beyond all comparison in its contribution to the improvement of transportation, engineering and building construction. The greater part of the steel went into rails, the output of which exceeded two hundred and ninety thousand tons in 1875 and nine hundred and fifty thousand tons in 1880. Their durability as compared with iron rails was an indispensable quality. The huge crops of the Middle West and the growing volume of manufactured goods from the Mississippi Valley could never have been carried without them.¹²

The years 1865-1873 also witnessed the emergence of the four factors whose combination made possible the development of the American meat-packing business upon an international scale. These were the tidal overflow of the plains by the cattle ranchers, the ramification of railways throughout the cattle country, the invention of refrigeration and the appearance of men astute enough to organize the distribution of livestock and meats in an efficient way. In the first year of peace the railway reached Kansas City, a cattle market and shipping point was established at Abilene, and some thirty-five thousand cattle were sent East from this terminus. It was

¹⁰ John Fritz, *Autobiography* (N. Y., 1912), 166 ff.; J. M. Swank, *History of the Manufacture of Iron in All Ages* (Phila., 1884), chap. xvi.

¹¹ Mine owners raised their prices, whereupon some steel mills acquired their own mines. *N. Y., Eve. Post*, Aug. 21, 1873.

¹² Barbed-wire fencing became commercially important by 1874 when Joseph H. Glidden and Jacob Haish began a battle over patent rights; wire nails, in 1875 when Joseph Goebbles founded the Kentucky Wire Nail Works in Covington. Industrial Museum of American Steel and Wire Company (Worcester, Mass.), *Book*, no. 2

clear to farsighted men that the West would shortly become one vast livestock range, crying for a market.

Already in Milwaukee and Chicago two of the great packers of the future, Philip D. Armour and Nelson Morris, had established themselves in readiness for this rich opportunity.¹³ Armour, an adventurous New Yorker, had risen during the war to be partner in Jacob Plankinton's packing house in Milwaukee, then the fourth largest of its kind in America. The business, thanks to large war contracts and to Armour's careful watch upon price fluctuations, expanded rapidly, throwing out branches in Chicago and Kansas City; and he determined to head a firm of his own. A flood of cattle and hogs had poured in war times into the Chicago slaughterhouses, becoming so unmanageable that the Illinois legislature was compelled in 1865 to incorporate the Union Stockyards, which on Christmas day of that year opened its new facilities—three hundred and forty-five rather swampy acres just south of the city limits—to the livestock shippers. Two years later Armour and Company, an enterprise in which Philip Armour was assisted by several able brothers, began meat packing in Chicago, and it was not long before the Armour brand was known in all parts of the world. Nelson Morris, a young Bavarian Jew, had been even earlier in entering the Chicago field. He went into meat packing at twenty-two, in the first days of the Civil War, and had no difficulty in securing large army contracts. When the conflict ended his business was flourishing. By 1870 Armour and Nelson Morris in Chicago and Jacob Plankinton in Milwaukee had emerged as the foremost Western packers, and were already taking the leadership from the older Eastern houses, like those of Jacob Dold in Buffalo and the Cordukes in Cincinnati.¹⁴

One Eastern packer possessed a driving energy equal to their own—Gustavus F. Swift.¹⁵ A Cape Cod Yankee, Swift had risen so rapidly from the position of a local butcher that by the middle seventies he was conducting one of the largest dressed-beef businesses in New

¹³ R. A. Clemen, *The American Livestock and Meat Industry* (N. Y., 1923), 149 ff.

¹⁴ F. W. Gunsaulus, "Philip D. Armour," *Am. Rev. of Revs.*, XXIII (1901), 167-176; A. Warren, "Philip D. Armour," *McClure's*, II (1894), 260; T. W. Goodspeed, "Gustavus Franklin Swift," *Chicago University Record* (new ser.), VII (1921), 96-116.

¹⁵ Clemen, *Livestock and Meat Industry*, 159 ff.

England. He knew that his natural sphere was the West and the year 1875 found him cautiously looking about for a site for a plant. In a very short time he had a large slaughterhouse in Chicago and was packing meats in competition with Armour and Morris. It was he who saw that beef might be fully dressed in Chicago and sent East, perfectly fresh, in refrigerator cars; and in initiating this fresh dressed-beef business on a large scale, he revolutionized the packing industry.¹⁶ The industry now concentrated itself in a few great cities to an extent previously impossible, with large resulting gains in the cheapness and quality of the meat served on American tables. The local butcher, especially in the East, was thrust to the wall,¹⁷ and even large Eastern slaughterhouses faced a competition from the Mississippi Valley which they had difficulty in meeting. Kansas City, with her packing houses still closer than Chicago to the range, sent two carloads of refrigerated meats to New York and one to Boston in the fall of 1875, thus opening a business which increased steadily. By the end of the seventies a general effort was being made by Western packers, and with success, to develop an Eastern market for all the beef and pork they could dress.¹⁸

As the control of the meat-packing business passed to Chicago and Kansas City, simultaneously the seats of the milling industry were transferred to Minneapolis and in lesser degree to St. Louis and Chicago, with direct benefits both to wheat growers and customers. Its Western development heralded the ultimate extinction of the small gristmills scattered by thousands over the nation and it made possible the rapid settlement of Minnesota wheatlands and the overflow of farmers into the Dakota valleys. Here, too, we meet picturesque and aggressive figures in the persons of three Minneapolis millers: Cadwallader C. Washburn, Charles A. Pillsbury and George M. Christian. The two former were New Englanders by birth, Washburn being one of a group of Maine brothers who achieved a singu-

¹⁶ Commissioner of Agriculture, *Report for 1870*, 250 ff.; L. F. Nickerson, "Refrigeration," *National Provisioner*, III (1891), no. 8; L. D. H. Weld, *Private Freight Cars and American Railways* (Columbia Univ., *Studies*, XXI, no. 1), 16.

¹⁷ Board of Health (N. Y. City), *Report of Sanitary Committee on Slaughtering for 1874*.

¹⁸ Clemen, *Livestock and Meat Industry*, chap. ii; Charles Winans, *Evolution of a Vast Industry* (Chicago, n. d.).

larly varied eminence.¹⁹ while Pillsbury had worked his way through Dartmouth College in the class of 1863. Christian was an Alabamian who came North after the war in search of opportunities lacking at home, and in 1869 was made a partner in Washburn's establishment.²⁰ With wheat fields, railways and water power all at hand in Minneapolis, these men were further aided by the introduction of new mechanical processes. They adopted the "gradual reduction" method brought to them in 1870 by a Minnesotan named Edward La Croix, which preserved much of the gluten previously lost with the bran. This process was of cardinal importance to the Northern wheat belt, for whereas previously winter wheat had made the best flour, now the hard spring wheat furnished as good a product. But men like Pillsbury were still not satisfied. Early in the seventies he and other Northwesterners went to Europe to investigate the milling processes of various nations, but particularly of Hungary, where for decades wheat had been reduced to flour by slowly passing it through a series of chilled iron rollers. In 1874 the Hungarian system was adopted, with modifications, in the Washburn and Pillsbury establishments and gradually extended to other American mills. The result was a fine flour which attracted every buyer by its snowy whiteness and made better bread than Americans had ever before eaten.²¹

Even more Aladdin-like was the development of the Pennsylvania oil fields. Petroleum was destined to be the foundation for a host of new industries, and though few of its uses were discovered between 1865 and 1878, these few were important in themselves and still more important for the vistas they opened up.²² At the beginning of our period only six years had elapsed since Colonel E. L. Drake sank the first oil well near the village of Titusville in western Pennsylvania. In 1864 it was a district of more than four hundred square miles dotted over with derricks and producing during the twelve months

¹⁹ Gaillard Hunt, *Israel, Elihu and Cadwallader Washburn, a Chapter in American Biography* (N. Y., 1925), *passim*.

²⁰ For biographies see *Northwestern Miller*, Sept. 10, 1924.

²¹ Hester M. Pollock, *Our Minnesota* (N. Y., 1917), 196 ff.; *Northwestern Miller*, March 12, 1924.

²² Waldemar Kaempffert, ed., *A Popular History of American Invention* (N. Y., 1924), II, 83.

more than two million one hundred thousand barrels. Already some of the uses of the new product, which a half-dozen years earlier had been a quack Indian medicine, were known through half the world. It lubricated machinery in Manchester and Lyons; Swiss peasants and English noblemen illuminated their abodes with its mellow rays; it was used to light mariners in the wild Indian Ocean and along the South American coasts. Many New Bedford mariners, reading the fate of their trade, had abandoned whale fishing to seek the oil fields.²³ There was no lack of a market, and the rapidity with which oil lamps sold in homes, rich and poor alike, assured it of a steady expansion.

The hold which petroleum had gained upon the popular imagination in the East was illustrated by the speculative mania of 1865, precipitated by the sudden opening in January of a new basin on Pithole Creek. Within six weeks an almost untouched sylvan district became the site of Pithole City and its ten thousand inhabitants, which steadily increased until it held five thousand more. The typical evolution of the mining or oil town was crowded into a few months: tents and shanties gave way to good frame residences, to long streets of restaurants, saloons, land offices and stores. For a time Pithole City, which not many years later reverted to an open wheat field, had a postal business outrivalling all cities in the state except Philadelphia.²⁴ Stimulated by the new discovery, a fever of speculation seized the large Eastern centers. The capital of the oil companies of public record, which had been computed early that year at three hundred and twenty-six million dollars, rose by mid-summer to at least five hundred million dollars, with new companies springing into life every hour. The rush of population lifted numerous hamlets almost overnight into small cities; the almost continuous loss of life due to carelessness and lawlessness proved no deterrent.

The chief initial difficulty of the industry, which despite constant vicissitudes and disappointments kept on growing, was to store and

²³ E. P. Oberholtzer, *United States since the Civil War* (N. Y., 1917-1926, in progress), I, 255.

²⁴ G. S. Montague, *Rise and Progress of the Standard Oil Company* (N. Y., 1904), 5. See also Andrew Cone and W. R. Johns, *Petrolia: a Brief History of the Pennsylvania Petroleum Region* (Walter Jones, ed., N. Y., 1870); G. W. Brown, *Old Times in Oildom* (Oil City, Penn., 1909); S. G. Bayne, *Derricks of Destiny, an Autobiography* (N. Y., 1924), 34-84.

transport the oil. The expedients of the early days were picturesquely crude. Oil Creek had been navigable to the Allegheny in freshets and the desperate producers resorted for a time to artificial floods. That is, they repaired the old mill dams, collected water behind them and loosed it at prearranged hours, sweeping a crowded flotilla of oil boats—sometimes six hundred—down to the river. More commonly they relied upon teamsters who were as rough and undependable as the muddy roads.²⁵ Naturally it was not long before inventive men hit upon the remedy, and in 1865 the first extensive pipe line, carrying eighty barrels of oil every hour over a stretch of seven miles, was placed in operation despite the teamsters' protests. It was followed by others, and the price of delivering oil to the Allegheny River boats was reduced from two dollars and fifty cents or three dollars a barrel to one dollar or even fifty cents. At the same time the tank car, invented by Charles P. Hatch, began to take the place of ordinary cars loaded with barrels. Before 1870 long lines of wooden tank cars became familiar in Pennsylvania and Ohio, and soon afterwards these leaky and inflammable carriers were replaced by tubular iron cars.²⁶

As the oil fields developed, a great new refining industry sprang up, offering work to thousands. By 1865 there were a number of large refineries, producing benzine, gasoline, coal oil, paraffin and tar. Very shortly the refineries began to mass themselves at two points, Cleveland and Pittsburgh. The former city in 1865 had thirty such businesses and at the end of the following year sixty. For some time the two centers ran neck and neck, but at the beginning of the seventies the superior position of Cleveland became evident, for having the Great Lakes and Erie Canal as well as the New York Central, it lay upon competitive transportation lines, while Pittsburgh was completely dependent upon the Pennsylvania Railroad.²⁷ A centralization of the refining business was inevitable. The keen competition in refining methods, which were susceptible of great improvement, alone sufficed to drive many small manufactories from the arena.

²⁵ Bayne, *Derricks of Destiny*, 66-67.

²⁶ Kaempfert, *Invention*, II, 93-94; Ida M. Tarbell, *History of the Standard Oil Company* (N. Y., 1904), I, chap. i.

²⁷ Tarbell, *Standard Oil Company*, I, 38 ff.; Montague, *Standard Oil Company*, 19.

It was at this moment that there appeared upon the scene the decisive factor in the sweep toward unification: a leader sufficiently astute, aggressive and merciless to drive it to its logical conclusion, the erection of a monopoly. In 1865 John D. Rockefeller, a young Cleveland commission dealer of twenty-six, launched into the oil trade under the firm name of Rockefeller & Andrews.²⁸ The Civil War had given him, as it did Armour and others, the capital needed for commercial undertakings on a large scale. Rockefeller saw that the necessary economies in refining were beyond the reach of any firm which had less than a half million in capital, and that the larger the unit the greater would be its efficiency. He pursued a policy of steady expansion. A second refinery was established. H. M. Flagler was accepted as partner, a New York office was opened, and one rival manufactory after another was absorbed. In June, 1870, there appeared the Standard Oil Company of Ohio, with a capital of a million dollars and a position of towering strength in the industry. It was the largest company in the largest refining center of the country, with a daily output of one thousand five hundred barrels, or about one seventh of the whole production of Cleveland. Rockefeller's ambition, however, was far from satisfied.²⁹

Thus the oil industry stood at a crucial point in 1870. Petroleum was being pumped from a large district of northwestern Pennsylvania, and wells were being sunk from West Virginia to Missouri in the hope of finding new fields. A business of which nobody had dreamed ten years earlier was giving the world more than five million barrels of oil annually, of which one hundred and fifty million gallons were going abroad, together with millions of gallons of gasoline, naphtha and benzine.³⁰ Hardly less than two hundred million dollars was invested in the business. The refineries had to keep pace with the oil harvest: Pittsburgh was now refining almost six thousand barrels a day, New York City more than nine thousand, the oil fields about nine thousand and Cleveland about twelve thousand.³¹ The leading railways reaching the oil region, the Penn-

²⁸ J. D. Rockefeller, *Random Reminiscences of Men and Events* (N. Y., 1909), gives an excellent impression of the oil magnate's personality.

²⁹ Montague, *Standard Oil Company*, 6-7.

³⁰ See *Scientific American*, July 1, 1865, for beginnings of the coal-tar dye industry.

³¹ Tarbell, *Standard Oil Company*, I, 51.

sylvania, New York Central and Erie, were keenly aware of the rich prize at stake and were bending every effort to gain the central stream of the traffic. It was under these circumstances that Rockefeller, who had already for two or three years insisted that the Erie and New York Central systems grant him secret freight rebates, planned a new coup. This was nothing less than the formation of a great pool of refiners which, by using the weapon of discriminatory freight rates, should take control of the oil market. The story of this attempt, its temporary failure and eventual success, must be left to a later time.

Meanwhile industries which could not be called new were exhibiting a large-scale standardization, involving also a concentration of capital, which gave them an appearance of entire novelty. In this roster the manufacture of men's clothing and of boots and shoes stood preëminent. During the Civil War a farsighted Scotchman, Gordon McKay, built up a huge business in supplying the army with machine-made shoes. Manufacturers East and West adopted the new machinery, which was rapidly improved, until it was hardly a fiction to say that leather was put in at one end and came out finished footwear at the other. Not only were shoes cheapened by the new process, but they were made more attractive and comfortable than the product of the ordinary artisan at the bench.³² A single workman was able to turn out three hundred pairs in one day, and a single factory in Massachusetts was soon producing as many shoes as thirty thousand Paris bootmakers.

The manufacture of ready-made clothes had as striking a growth just after the Civil War. The first thought of the discharged soldier was to obtain good civilian clothes and this demand was sustained by the development of the West and the heavy immigration. Since it was difficult for garment cutters to keep pace with the sewing machines, inventors brought out mechanical cloth cutters, the first of which was made on Staten Island in 1872.³³ Few sights struck foreign travelers so forcibly as the enormous piles of ready-made suits exposed in shop windows at surprisingly low prices.

But this consolidation of industrial enterprises was evident in almost every field of business. Not until the Civil War did any cot-

³² Andrew Carnegie, *Triumphant Democracy* (N. Y., 1887), 226-227.

³³ Kaempffert, *Invention*, II, 395.

ton mill have a hundred thousand spindles, or any iron furnace produce more than three hundred tons a week.⁸⁴ The success of the Waltham enterprise in making watches by factory methods instead of slowly and expensively by hand led to the establishment of the American Watch Factory at Elgin, Illinois, in 1865. The sewing-machine factory, the farm-implement factory, the piano and organ factory, all improved their processes, their subdivision of labor and their capacity for quantity production in these flush years. Many small businesses sprang into a hothouse life, for money was abundant,⁸⁵ but all the while the principal manufactories—those at the top—grew astonishingly. Less and less did the American people consume goods made in small and simple establishments managed by individual proprietors; more and more did they use goods from large factories managed by corporate boards.

A pronounced westward thrust of industry became evident quite apart from the birth of the meat-packing and flour-milling undertakings of the Northwest. Besides the Elgin watch factory and the Union Stock Yards in Chicago, the first year of peace saw large pottery works started at Peoria, woolen mills at Atchison, a farm-implement factory at Moline, and an important stove foundry at Quincy, Illinois.⁸⁶ Two years later George Pullman founded the Pullman Palace Car Company in Chicago. William H. Seward remarked of McCormick's reaper that through its use "the line of civilization moves westward thirty miles each year," and it was natural that the makers of agricultural machinery should move west too. McCormick's own factory stood on the north bank of the Chicago River. In Akron and Canton, Ohio, during 1865 about ten thousand mowing machines were made, though the price averaged one hundred and twenty-five dollars each. Two of the heritages of the war were a beet-sugar industry in Illinois and Wisconsin, and a flourishing tobacco industry in the latter state. Particularly interesting was the progress of the brewing business in St. Louis and Milwaukee, with their large German population, for the nation was beginning to appreciate the fact that beer was less harmful than ale or spirits, while the excise tax placed upon it was comparatively

⁸⁴ Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States*, 415, 456.

⁸⁵ See *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1921 (Wash., 1922), 868.

⁸⁶ *American Annual Cyclopedia* (N. Y., 1861-1903), V. (1865), 432, 458.

small. In 1865 Milwaukee, where the Schlitz and Pabst companies were active, was producing fifty-five thousand barrels of beer, while in 1873 the sale had risen to two hundred and sixty thousand.³⁷

This westward march of manufacturing was plainly indicated by the census of 1870. It showed that in the nation as a whole the number of establishments had increased in the decade almost eighty per cent. But in Indiana they had more than doubled, in Illinois they had trebled, and in Missouri they had more than trebled. Before the war the great states along the upper Mississippi had been almost wholly agricultural and their cities had depended upon the trade of the farms; now the smoke of factory chimneys showed that they were definitely passing out of the pioneer stage. In the East, the agglutination of industry in strategically placed centers interested every observer. Bridgeport, Connecticut, for example, was just rising to a place of prominence as the seat of the Wheeler & Wilson Sewing-Machine Company; the Simpson Waterproof Cloth Company, which had made trainloads of raincoats for the soldiers; the Hotchkiss Company, which had turned from shells to general hardware; and the newly established Mallory Hat Company.³⁸

Financial institutions responded to the buoyant expansion of the time like vegetation to a tropical sun. The inflation of credit made banking a business which tyros could enter with success. The federal government having established a great new national banking system, between the fall of 1864 and the fall of 1865 the number of such banks rose from five hundred and eighty-four to 1,566.³⁹ But even more remarkable was the multiplication of savings banks. The workmen were enjoying what seemed high pay, and needed repositories for it. In Massachusetts there were ninety-three savings banks in 1862, and one hundred and eighty in 1875; in New York State in the same period the number increased from seventy-four to one hundred and fifty-eight. Costly offices were hired and fitted up, high rates of interest were promised and extravagant salaries were

³⁷ Frederick Merk, *Economic History of Wisconsin during the Civil War Decade* (State Hist. Soc. of Wis., *Studies*, I, 1916), 145, 154; F. F. Cook, *Bygone Days in Chicago* (Chicago, 1910), 196 ff.

³⁸ *Scientific American*, July 8, 1865; *Compendium of the Ninth Census* (Wash., 1872), 796 ff.

³⁹ W. O. Scroggs, *Century of Banking Progress* (Garden City, N. Y., 1924), 203.

granted.⁴⁰ Insurance companies, many of them speculative ventures with insufficient capital, incompetent management and a shocking inattention to sound actuarial principles, rose on every hand. Until these years trust companies had been almost unknown in the United States, but now there sprang up a sudden realization of their usefulness and opportunities, and between 1864 and 1875 no fewer than forty came into existence.⁴¹ Many observers became alarmed by the disturbance of the former balance between production and consumption, pointing to the huge growth of all businesses of exchange—trade agencies, commission houses, brokerage, banking, retailing—as not wholly legitimate but in large part the forced fruit of inflation. When the census of 1870 was taken, it was found that while the population had been increasing twenty-two and one-half per cent, the trading classes, including those engaged in transportation, had increased forty per cent. Francis A. Walker computed that the nation was maintaining a useless array of middlemen and retailers equivalent to the standing armies of the British Empire and with a greater number of dependents.⁴²

In answer to the heavy demands of industry upon the labor market, and to the alluring spectacle of prosperity, comfort and opportunity presented by American life, the stream of European immigration rose rapidly to a torrent. The Fenian movement and land troubles in Ireland, the panic of 1866 in England and the Austro-Prussian conflict gave tens of thousands of Europeans a special incentive to emigrate to the United States. For the first time American manufacturers combined in considerable numbers to send agents to Europe to stimulate emigration, and their efforts advertised the opportunities open to active men. The increasing speed and cheapness of transatlantic travel was also a factor of importance. In 1856 a mere handful of European newcomers, some five thousand in a total of one hundred and thirty-one thousand, had arrived in steamships, the others using sailing vessels; but in 1865 the great majority were transported by steam. Not quite a quarter of a million immigrants were admitted in 1865, and thereafter the number rose year

⁴⁰ *Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, April 25, 1874.

⁴¹ *Com. and Fin. Chron.*, Aug. 3, 1878; H. W. Lanier, *A Century of Banking in New York, 1822-1922* (N. Y., 1922), chap. x.

⁴² F. A. Walker, "Some Results of the Census," *Journ. of Soc. Sci.*, V, 71-97.

by year until in 1873 it reached the then amazing total of four hundred and sixty thousand.⁴³

In this fresh surge of Old World population certain novel, interesting and valuable elements appeared prominently. When in 1850 Fredrika Bremer, the Swedish novelist, visited the Northwest, she found a large advance-guard of Scandinavians; now the central host was coming, and by 1870 there were almost forty-five thousand of them in Illinois alone. The first Swedish secular journal, the *Svenska Amerikanaren*, was established in Minnesota in 1866, edited by Colonel Hans Mattson who became known as an active agent in Europe to induce Scandinavians to migrate.⁴⁴ About one hundred and twenty-five thousand Scandinavians entered the republic in the first half of the seventies. Some Slavs, German-Russian Mennonites, and Bohemians also arrived. Decidedly more important was the accession of Italians from Sicily and Naples; for in the same half decade slightly more than a hundred thousand people of Latin blood, most of them Italians seeking work in the construction gangs on the railroads and other rough employment, were admitted. But it was the British, Irish and German immigration which continued the heaviest, these nationalities leading in the order named. The result of the inflow was that by 1875 the nation had about seven and a half million of foreign-born among its forty million people.⁴⁵

The building of railways, to which the nation turned with characteristic energy just after the war, was urgently needed. Not only was the meager Southern system now largely in ruins, but the railways from the East to the Middle West were quite inadequate. The produce of the Mississippi Valley had increased faster than the means of carrying it, and the corn growers of Iowa, the meat packers of Chicago and the oil shippers of Pennsylvania were especially vociferous in complaint.⁴⁶ The congestion on the trunk lines was accentuated by seasonal difficulties, for at the close of the war one third of the freight annually carried from the central valley to the

⁴³ Philip Davis, *Immigration and Americanization* (Boston, 1920), 66, presents the figures by years. See *Com. and Fin. Chron.*, Sept. 1, 1866, for comment.

⁴⁴ R. E. Park, *The Immigrant Press and Its Control* (N. Y., 1922), 320; Pollock, *Our Minnesota*, 333.

⁴⁵ See *Am. Ann. Cyclop.*, XVII (1877), 386, for general review.

⁴⁶ Sir S. M. Peto, *The Resources and Prospects of America* (London, 1866), 227, 278, 294.

Atlantic was still conveyed by the lakes and canals, and when they were frozen, the rail blockade often became disastrous. These transportation difficulties depressed the inland markets and kept land values unduly low. The need for new arteries grew steadily more acute, for every year a hundred thousand settlers poured across the Mississippi.

This task of construction was made the easier because railway profits had been high during the war and capital was easy to obtain, while the spirit of national self-confidence also played a large rôle.⁴⁷ At the close of the conflict the whole American system totaled about thirty-five thousand miles and had cost a little more than a billion. Then came an amazing leap forward, and by the end of 1872 the railway mileage had doubled.⁴⁸ Everyone looked upon this growth with rejoicing. It was estimated that the existing lines created more wealth each year than was absorbed by the cost of extensions and H. V. Poor concluded in 1868 that the gross earnings of the railways amounted in a little over four years to as much as their cost.⁴⁹

The proudest achievement of the railway builders, the completion of a transcontinental line, had everywhere been regarded as an urgent task even before the fighting ended. The Far West pointed to its farming possibilities, its mineral wealth, and to a world's commerce with the Orient waiting only for the steel highway. Samuel Bowles in his trip to the Pacific in 1865 found that the one question of a yearning population was, "When will the railroad be built?"⁵⁰ Eastern wealth wanted the opportunities for investment, Eastern labor wanted those for employment. National leaders were apprehensive lest a new generation should arise on the Pacific Coast without any warm attachment to the Union; while some social observers believed that the West was suffering from the excessively rapid growth of communities far removed from the conventional and religious restraints found in the rest of America and that the influence of these communities upon American manners, letters and politics was vulgarizing.⁵¹ Every year the pressure of goods and passengers

⁴⁷ *Nation*, March 11, 1869.

⁴⁸ *Com. and Fin. Chron.*, Jan. 11, 1873.

⁴⁹ H. V. Poor, *Influence of the Railroads of the United States in the Creation of its Commerce and Wealth* (New York, 1869).

⁵⁰ Samuel Bowles, *Across the Continent* (Springfield, Mass., 1865), 255 ff.

⁵¹ *Nation*, Jan. 11, 1866.

upon the slender means of communication with the Far West became more excessive.

What were these means? The West in 1865 was served beyond the Mississippi Valley railheads by a fast growing network of freighter and stage lines, and already it boasted of one highly developed system, that of Benjamin Holladay.⁵² This system, which covered a distance of three thousand three hundred miles in all, was a product of government patronage under a federal contract for the carriage of the transcontinental mails and included branch lines to such new mining towns as Virginia City in Montana and Boise City, Idaho. Though Holladay's rates were high (for the costs and risks were great), yet just after the war his stages were crowded with passengers who paid a fare of one hundred and seventy-five dollars from the Missouri River to Denver, three hundred and fifty dollars to Salt Lake City and from four hundred to five hundred dollars to California.⁵³ In answer to the constantly increasing demands there occurred in 1866 a general reorganization and consolidation of the Western stage lines. The Wells Fargo Company, with its huge capital, took over Holladay's stages, paying him two million five hundred thousand dollars, and also acquired the Pioneer Stage Company and all other stage and express properties between the Missouri River and the Pacific. It bought new coaches, improved their speed and opened fresh lines. Like Holladay himself, the company, with its chain of fortified storehouses, was not wholly popular and was frequently denounced as monopolistic.⁵⁴

Though the stagecoach was a rude, uncomfortable and, at times, uncertain mode of travel, it served its purpose remarkably well and sometimes the speed attained was surprising. Schuyler Colfax, Samuel Bowles and Albert D. Richardson in 1875 covered the distance from Atchison to Denver, an arc-shaped route of six hundred and fifty-three miles, in four and a half days.⁵⁵ Bowles tells us that he

⁵² F. A. Root and W. E. Connelly, *The Overland Stage to California* (Topeka, 1901); G. D. Bradley, *The Story of the Pony Express* (Chicago, 1913); S. L. Clemens (Mark Twain, *pseud.*), *Roughing It* (Hartford, 1872).

⁵³ Holladay's investment was two million dollars. *Senate Miscel. Doc.*, 47 Cong., 2 sess., no. 19.

⁵⁴ F. L. Paxson, *The Last American Frontier* (N. Y., 1910), chap. xi.

⁵⁵ See letters of A. D. Richardson in *N. Y. Tribune*, June, July and Aug., 1865. For impressions by travelers see W. H. Dixon, *New America* (5th edn., rev., London, 1867), I, chap. iv; J. F. Rushing, *Across America* (N. Y., 1877), 150 ff.

found the food at the early stopping places better than that at the ordinary hotels and restaurants along the railway west of Chicago. On the stretch between Denver and Salt Lake City, where hostile Indians had been troublesome, they were not so well fed, the canned fruits and vegetables disappearing along with the tableclothes, and antelope meat becoming the staple dish. At every station fresh horses took the place of the jaded teams with a delay of only from two to four minutes, and every fifty miles a new driver climbed into the box.⁵⁶

The Union Pacific Railroad, begun during 1864, was easily the greatest engineering feat that America had undertaken, and next to the Suez Canal and the Mont Cenis tunnel, completed almost at the same time, it might fairly have been rated the world's greatest engineering achievement. Mountain gorge, umbrageous wilderness and arid plain, amounting in all to one thousand eight hundred miles from Omaha to Sacramento, had to be traversed; and hostile Indians had to be fought back. To house, feed and direct the thousands of laborers was a formidable problem, for the railway passed through only two small settled areas, Carson City and the Salt Lake district, and near a third, Denver. Foundries and machine shops had to be erected as the work progressed. The Central Pacific—the western portion—gained at the start, but when they met at Promontory Point in 1869, the Union Pacific—the eastern line—had laid 1,086 miles against 689 by its rival.

Despite the difference in the amount of mileage laid, the business enterprise displayed by the Central Pacific was far superior to that of its rival.⁵⁷ The Californians who undertook this line were merchants past middle age who had acquired a generous competence without ever interesting themselves in railways. Leland Stanford, the foremost figure, had, after a brief career as a lawyer in Wisconsin, become a wholesale grocer in San Francisco, where he thrust himself forward in politics and in 1861 was elected governor. He was a man of great tenacity and strength of purpose, of imposing physique and masterful mien. Collis P. Huntington, a Connecticut Yankee who had established a large hardware business in California, was one of

⁵⁶ Bowles, *Across the Continent*, letters 3-5, 14-17.

⁵⁷ H. H. Bancroft, *The Pacific States of North America* (San Fran., 1882-1890), XIX, 543 ff.

the keenest merchants in the West, cool, energetic and quick-sighted. Charles Crocker, a self-made man who had built up a large dry-goods trade, had shown himself an indefatigable pusher and an adroit manager of gangs of workmen. These three, all living in Sacramento in the early sixties, were converted to enthusiastic belief in the transcontinental railway by a promoter named T. D. Judah, the engineer of the Sacramento Valley and other rail lines. Their aim at first was simply to reach the rich Nevada mines and gain control of the Nevada trade; and in June of 1861 they had organized the Central Pacific Railroad Company, with Stanford as president, Huntington vice-president and Judah the chief engineer. When Congress authorized the transcontinental road, they hastened to accept the terms of the government for the western extremity. They did their own work, dismissing all subcontractors and organizing the firm of Crocker and Company to secure all the profits from construction.⁵⁸

A huge task it was. There was little white labor, and coolies were imported from China until by 1865 some five thousand were at work and in 1866 more than ten thousand. Iron, machinery, rolling stock and other supplies came by sea, a hazardous journey of months around Cape Horn or across Panama. The road had to traverse the Sierras at a height of more than seven thousand feet and in a space of sixty miles it passed through fifteen tunnels. Trestles, culverts, snowsheds, tanks and drainage systems must be built at enormous expense. Skeptics were loud in ridicule, yet the construction was rapidly and efficiently carried forward. In the first three years (1863-1865) about twenty miles were built annually; about thirty in 1866 and in 1867, when the state line was reached, forty-six miles. The company had long since resolved not to stop at the Nevada mines, but to push into Utah and meet the Union Pacific as far east as possible, perhaps at Salt Lake. Despite the hurry, the road was built for permanence.⁵⁹ Nor did it suffer from any scandal like the Credit Mobilier affair.

On the east, the Union Pacific met fewer difficulties. It had plenty

⁵⁸ The standard general works on the Central and Union Pacific lines are: J. P. Davis, *The Union Pacific Railway* (Chicago, 1894), and Nelson Trottman, *History of the Union Pacific* (N. Y., 1923).

⁵⁹ Charles Nordhoff, *California for Health, Pleasure and Residence* (new ed., rev., N. Y., 1882), 32 ff.

of labor, the Irish workingmen available in 1864 being supplemented the next year by large bodies of discharged soldiers. With General G. M. Dodge as its chief engineer, the laborers had a semi-military organization as they crossed the Indian-troubled prairies, and more than once dropped their picks to deploy as skirmishers.⁶⁰ At the height of the undertaking, with more than twelve thousand men busy, the actual construction was a scene to quicken the pulse: the light cars bringing up the rails, the builders hurrying them into place, the gaugers, spikers and bolters following close behind and swinging to the grand anvil chorus of the sledge hammers. A city that Samuel Bowles appropriately called "Hell on wheels" staggered forward with the railway across the plains—a terminal that every few weeks was packed upon a long string of freight cars, with houses, furniture, clothes, tents, gambling machines, bar equipment and rubbish, and transported to a new site.⁶¹

Almost before the nation knew it, the two iron bands met fifty-three miles west of Ogden, Utah. Here on May 10, 1869, while the entire country seemed to stand in expectation, the last spike was driven. As the smoke of the two engines facing each other mingled and the final three strokes went home, the telegraph in every city of the Union clicked off: "One, two, three—done!" East and West were joined and the frontier had begun to disappear from American history.⁶² This iron girdle was, by modern standards, a precarious link. East of Ogden it was a hastily graded, ill-ballasted, poorly equipped railway of a single track, with few decent stations, shops or round-houses; it had been built by the dizzy methods of the *Credit Mobilier*, and had cost three times as much as it should.⁶³ Yet it closed an old era and opened a new one.

East of this slight transcontinental thread a new network of lines spread rapidly throughout the Middle West. In Illinois alone the years 1870-1871 saw one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five miles

⁶⁰ Slason Thompson, *A Short History of American Railways, Covering Ten Decades* (N. Y., 1925), 174 ff.

⁶¹ J. H. Beadle, *The Undeveloped West* (Phila., 1873), 87 ff., pictures the rough town of Benton. See also W. A. Bell, *New Tracks in North America* (London, 1869), I, 17 ff.

⁶² *Nation*, VIII, May 13, 1869.

⁶³ J. B. Crawford, *The Credit Mobilier of America* (Boston, 1880); Rowland Hazard, *The Credit Mobilier of America* (Providence, 1881).

of railway constructed, most of the routes running east and west across the state. The counties here and in other states were allowed to bond themselves heavily and sometimes foolishly in aid of railway enterprises. One railway after another, meanwhile, debouched from Illinois across Iowa or Missouri to tap the Great Plains.⁶⁴ The Chicago & Northwestern crossed the Mississippi at Clinton, Iowa, and pushed rapidly west till early in 1867 the first train rolled into Council Bluffs. The St. Joseph & Council Bluffs line, spanning northern Missouri, reached the latter town in December, 1867. Work at the same time was proceeding on the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific, which had thrown the first bridge across the Mississippi at Rock Island as early as 1856, and which reached the Missouri at Council Bluffs in the early summer of 1869. The Chicago, Burlington and Quincy entered Nebraska in 1869, and in 1871 purchased a small railway which gave it a terminus in Omaha.⁶⁵ It was clear that Omaha and Kansas City would be the two great transportation centers west of Chicago, yet it was not until March, 1873, when the Union Pacific completed a two-thousand-seven-hundred-and-fifty-foot structure, that the Missouri River was bridged at the former point. Until that day all freight and passengers had to be carried across in ferryboats, against the uncertainties of a strong current and shifting bottom.⁶⁶

The northern country, so recently a solitude, was now being pierced in every direction. In Wisconsin the railway mileage more than doubled in the years 1868-1873 inclusive, bringing the peninsular wilderness within sound of the locomotive whistle. Minnesota sent Edward Rice, whom it pleasantly called its Chesterfield for his fine bearing and genial manners, to London to obtain capital for construction, and by 1872 a web of lines was being spun over the southern and eastern sections. There was a two-hundred-and-seventeen-mile railway from St. Paul westward across the entire state to Breckinridge; there were lines southwest from Minneapolis to Fari-

⁶⁴ E. L. Bogart and C. M. Thompson, *The Industrial State, 1870-1893* (C. W. Alvord, ed., *The Centennial History of Illinois, Illinois Centennial Series, Springfield, Ill.*, 1898-1920, IV), 318 ff.

⁶⁵ A. C. Wakeley, *History of Omaha: the Gate City, and Douglas County, Nebraska* (Chicago, 1917), 252 ff.

⁶⁶ A. C. Wakeley, *History of Omaha and Douglas County*, 253; Alfred Sorensen, *Story of Omaha from Pioneer Days* (Omaha, 1889), chap. xxxi.

bault and southeast from Minneapolis to Winona; and a new railway of great value wound through forest and over ravine to connect the Mississippi at St. Paul with the Great Lakes at Duluth.⁶⁷ In Nebraska a railway was completed to the new capital at Lincoln in the summer of 1870, and two years later the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy formed a junction with the Union Pacific at Kearney. Branch lines were overspreading western Missouri and thrusting out into Kansas.⁶⁸

Of especial importance was the commencement of a series of great new trunk lines roughly parallel to the Union Pacific. Only one of these lines lay to the north of Omaha and Denver—the Northern Pacific. As early as 1864 it had received a charter from Congress, the incorporators including many prominent Northern financiers and politicians; the route authorized lay from the head of Lake Superior to Puget Sound. Money was hard to obtain and until 1870, when Jay Cooke and his associates took up the enterprise, no actual construction was begun. But Cooke set to work with irresistible energy. By June, 1873, the railway had been extended four hundred and fifty miles westward to Bismarck on the Missouri River, and was giving a heavy impetus to Minnesota settlement. Then the Panic blasted the green plant, and its growth abruptly and totally stopped.⁶⁹ Similarly unfortunate was the history of the Southwestern Pacific, or Southern Pacific, which was extended from a point near St. Louis southwest to Vinita in Indian Territory when the Panic of 1873 caused it to default and ended construction. The ambitious Texas & Pacific hardly became more than a mere paper railroad, though under John C. Frémont it sufficed as a foundation for much gilded and rather reprehensible speculation.

Happily, some other trunk lines did far better. One was the Missouri Pacific, pushing from St. Louis to Kansas City. Another was the Kansas Pacific, which cut westward from Kansas City through the new towns of Wichita and Topeka to Denver, which it reached in the summer of 1870. Most interesting of all the great southwestern lines was the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé system, which flourished

⁶⁷ E. P. Oberholtzer, *Jay Cooke, Financier of the Civil War* (Phila., 1907), II, 96 ff.; J. G. Pyle, *Life of James J. Hill* (Garden City, 1917), I, 103 ff.

⁶⁸ Secretary of the Interior, *Report for 1875*, 113.

⁶⁹ Oberholtzer, *Jay Cooke*, II, chaps. xv-xvi.

like a green bay tree between 1868 and the Panic. Following the old Santa Fé trail, this railway, under the guidance of an indefatigable free-soil pioneer and promoter named Cyrus L. Holliday, reached Emporia in the summer of 1871, and by the close of the following year a furious spurt had carried it across the Colorado boundary. The shock of the Panic arrested it at Pueblo, at the foot of the Rockies, but the road opened various Kansas branches, and the Centennial year found it one of the important trunk arteries of the nation. Other railways whose names have long since become familiar, such as the Missouri, Kansas and Texas, and the Denver and Rio Grande, were being prosecuted in these years with greater or less success.⁷⁰

Was all this feverish railway expansion really healthy, well-planned or profitable? The element of speculative mania was evident to everyone. Thousands of miles of railway were being constructed in advance of real need and by the most questionable financial methods.⁷¹ With six or eight lines planned to cross the continent from east to west and as many more to connect the Great Lakes with the Gulf, the investing public was being fed by roseate dreams of an utterly unrealizable character. Altogether too much was being made of the supposed ability of any railway to create traffic in a virgin district. The competition among the lines tapping the West was growing keener and keener and was certain ultimately to force down their receipts. The stock of many companies had been recklessly watered; and the frequency with which dividends were declared in stock and scrip, not in cash, suggested that earnings were small. Year by year the method of financing new railway lines seemed to grow worse.⁷² At first the companies constructing them had sold for cash sufficient stock to pay for the work; but later the promoters

⁷⁰ Stuart Daggett, *Railroad Reorganization* (*Harvard Economic Studies*, IV), chaps. vi, ix; M. S. Snow, ed., *History of the Development of Missouri, and particularly of Saint Louis* (St. Louis, 1908), II, 332 ff. For Texas railway building, see Bancroft, *Pacific States*, XI, 570 ff.

⁷¹ For a thorough discussion of financial aspects of the "railmania," see *Com. and Fin. Chron.*, March 11, 1869. The astonishing activity in building and rebuilding Southern railways is set forth in the *Com. and Fin. Chron.*, Aug. 10, 1867; Dec. 19, 1868; Jan. 18, 1869. By the close of 1868 there were nearly five thousand miles under construction in this section.

⁷² See the *Nation*, VI, May 21, 1868, for a vivid characterization of dishonest methods of railroad financing.

had found a way of lining their pockets well by appropriating most or all of the stock to themselves and juggling it to high levels, while they paid for the road by reckless bond issues.

Even where financial operations were well-intentioned, the recklessness was often astounding. Jay Cooke's Northern Pacific railway was a comparatively well-managed enterprise, yet some of his methods of pushing it would now be deemed fantastic, if not insane. The first step of his firm was to organize a gigantic lobby to obtain the patronage of the government. Governors of Pennsylvania and Minnesota, congressmen, financiers and politicians were enlisted; money was used freely, and shares in the project were discreetly bestowed upon leaders who wanted *douceurs*; while Cooke himself argued with several refractory representatives. An enormous selling campaign was organized. Schuyler Colfax was offered a lucrative position if he would resign the vice-presidency; agents were granted territorial districts; squads of lecturers were organized and advertising was undertaken on the costliest scale. The road was bitterly attacked as a fraud and a thievish raid upon the public lands and Cooke spared no expense in replying to these assaults. As for the bonds, they bore an interest rate of seven and three tenths per cent, and the selling agents were to receive a commission of six per cent in cash and ten per cent in stock. In this manner was a golden millstone hung about the neck of the infant Northern Pacific.⁷³

So long as the country enjoyed its flush of after-war prosperity, the roads which were thus being built paid. For a time the profits of some seemed magnificent. Thus in 1867, fourteen of the leading lines of the nation showed aggregate earnings of more than sixty-five million dollars, and in the next year of almost seventy million dollars. The gross revenues of the railways of the whole country in 1867 were about twenty-seven per cent of their cost.⁷⁴ The generosity of the federal and state governments in land grants and cash subsidies assured at least a temporary affluence to a majority of the new railways. Even in the devastated South the roads returned to a dividend-paying basis with astonishing celerity. During 1867, for example, it

⁷³ Oberholtzer, *Jay Cooke*, II, 225 ff.

⁷⁴ "Our existing railroads are computed to create more wealth every year than is absorbed for the construction of new railroads." *Com. and Fin. Chron.*, Jan. 11, 1873.

was found that one thousand three hundred and thirty-three miles of railway in Georgia earned five thousand two hundred and eighty-seven dollars gross for every mile, which was more than one tenth of the cost of the lines and which permitted dividends of from two and a half to ten per cent.⁷⁵

Yet all the while there were ominous indications of the probable inability of many great railways to weather such a storm as burst in 1873. The chief of these was perhaps the difficulties into which the Union Pacific fell within a few years after its completion.⁷⁶ It and the Central Pacific charged excessively high rates on transcontinental freight, reaching at first ten or eleven cents in gold for every ton-mile: they demanded all that the traffic would bear. The same tea that was shipped from China to New York for two cents a pound by sea was carried from San Francisco to New York by rail for thirteen cents. To carry a ton of flour from San Francisco to Chicago cost one hundred and twenty-six dollars, while to transport it from Chicago to New York, a distance one third as great, the charge was only ten dollars. Passenger rates, which at the outset were almost equally exorbitant, were later reduced to a more tolerable level.⁷⁷ While the Central Pacific, carefully built and financed, flourished, the Union Pacific, wastefully built and recklessly financed, languished. It was burdened with interest payments on seventy-four million dollars in bonds and, if any thing were left, dividend payments on thirty-six million dollars in stock. Moreover, the Credit Mobilier scandal struck a heavy blow at its prestige. By 1872, when it was in the hands of a coterie headed by Commodore Vanderbilt's son-in-law, Horace F. Clark, it was in sore traits.

The land-grant railways naturally made every effort to people their wide holdings and the colonizing activities of the Santa Fé furnish an interesting example of the work of nearly all Western roads in scattering the seeds of future millions.⁷⁸ It held alternate sections in a ten-mile strip on each side of the main Kansas line. In 1870 the railway established a land department and invited the editors of between three hundred and four hundred newspapers to

⁷⁵ *Com. and Fin. Chron.*, Oct. 3, 1868.

⁷⁶ Anna Youngman, *The Economic Causes of Great Fortunes* (N. Y., 1909), chap. iii.

⁷⁷ Oberholtzer, *United States since the Civil War*, II, 482-483.

⁷⁸ Cy Warman, *Story of the Railroad* (N. Y., 1898), 113 ff.

come to Kansas, transportation free. Homeseekers were carried at half rates, and if any man bought land, his whole fare was refunded. Sometimes European agents of the railway recruited homeseekers in large groups, which were discharged from the trains at a suitable station, so that there was soon a community of Swedes at one spot, Englishmen at another, and Irishmen or even Russians at a third.⁷⁹

Not less important than the new railway construction was the establishment of long-distance trunk lines by the amalgamation of short railroads, the building of extensions or the conclusion of leasing arrangements. Hitherto travel from New York to Chicago had meant the use of eight or a dozen independent lines with repeated changes. In the East the New York Central led the way. In 1868 Commodore Vanderbilt combined the New York Central and the Hudson River railroads, furnishing a single road from New York to Buffalo; it was a logical step to arrange with the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern for through service to Chicago and in 1873 he made this line an integral part of the Central system.⁸⁰ Not merely that, but as early as May, 1870, he came to terms with the Rock Island and the Chicago & Northwestern, so that he could advertise an uninterrupted carriage of New York passengers as far west as Omaha. The Vanderbilt group of railways thus held control of four thousand five hundred miles of track and a capital of not less than a quarter billion dollars. The Pennsylvania, one of the most powerful lines in the country, having for years monopolized the traffic between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, was hardly behind in the race; its shrewd head, J. Edgar Thomson, used the Pennsylvania legislature as he needed it. Turning westward he reached Chicago by an agreement with the Columbus, Chicago and Indiana Central; at the same time he prevented the Erie from making a connection with the Western metropolis.⁸¹ Jay Gould, however, did shortly obtain a direct and unbroken communication between New York on the east, and Cleveland, Cincinnati and St. Louis on the west. In April, 1869, the Erie was able to advertise: "1,400 miles under one management; 860 miles without change of cars; the broad-gauge, double-track

⁷⁹ W. E. Miller, *The Peopling of Kansas* (Columbus, 1906).

⁸⁰ Daggett, *Railroad Reorganization*, 2 ff.

⁸¹ E. H. Mott, *Between the Ocean and the Lakes; the Story of Erie* (N. Y., 1899), 173, 177.

route between New York, Boston, and New England cities and the West." This made three main routes between the coast and the Middle West, and when the Baltimore & Ohio reached Chicago in 1874, there were four. Competition for passengers and freight was keen.

In the Mississippi Valley a similar consolidation took place under pressure of the demand for through trunk lines joining Chicago with the transcontinental roads built or planned to the Pacific. The Chicago & Northwestern, under the presidency of William B. Ogden, the greatest figure in Western railway affairs, was one of these lines; the Rock Island and the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy were others.⁸² The Illinois Central lost no time after the conflict in completing a through route, nine hundred and fifty miles almost as the crow flies, from Chicago to the Gulf. At the South also the tendency toward the formation of long trunk highways was irresistible. The organization of the Chesapeake and Ohio in 1868, a direct line from Norfolk to Cincinnati, furnished the shortest route from the Ohio Valley to tidewater. Both Norfolk and Charleston were joined at the same time with the Tennessee railways, so that they enjoyed easy communication with Memphis. The South, it should be said, was building railways rapidly during these years—more than twelve hundred miles of track in 1870, more than one thousand in 1871, and in 1873, nearly thirteen hundred miles.⁸³

One result of the tremendous railway expansion of the time was a sharp check upon the commerce of the Great Lakes and the inexorable conquest of much lake and canal business in grain carrying. Lake transportation had flourished during the war, coming out of the conflict with a great fleet of more than six hundred thousand tons; yet its essential weaknesses were evident.⁸⁴ During the winter months the vessels were icebound and idle, their capital charges meanwhile steadily mounting. Moreover, ships from Milwaukee and

⁸² Slason Thompson, *Cost, Capitalization and Estimated Value of American Railways* (3d edn., Chicago, 1908), 187; J. W. Cary, *The Organization and History of the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railway Company* (Milwaukee, 1892); W. H. Stennett, *Yesterday and Today; History of the Northwestern Railway System* (Chicago, 1910).

⁸³ *Com. and Fin. Chron.*, Feb. 15, 1873; J. L. Ringwalt, *Development of Transportation Systems in the United States* (Phila., 1888).

⁸⁴ C. R. Fish, "Some Phases of the Economic History of Wisconsin," *Wis. Hist. Soc., Proceeds.*, LV, 204-216.

Chicago had to round the Michigan peninsula, an indirect and wasteful route, and transfer charges added to the cost. The railways struck hard at these weaknesses through their ability to make long continuous hauls in all seasons. Almost as important was the development just after the war of "through freight" or "fast freight" companies, owning large numbers of freight cars, which, by contract with the railways, they sent express from shipper to consignee in every part of the nation.⁸⁵

Slowly but surely lake vessels were being driven out of existence, and many of the shipping centers of the Great Lakes felt their prosperity threatened. Chicago, already one of the greatest railway centers of the world, was quite safe; but Buffalo, at one extremity of the lakes and Milwaukee at the other, with Detroit and other ports between, were in grave danger. In 1869, through a convention of the boards of trade of all the principal lake ports, they took steps to meet the situation. Their plan was to enable the captains of all the lake freighters to offer lower rates, by reducing the transfer and terminal charges and by getting the marine insurance companies to cut their premiums. To a noteworthy extent they realized this program. Buffalo, Oswego and Toledo sliced their transfer charges by one half or three fourths, and the railway companies running between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River struck one half off their charges for wheat and flour; while, as the most important stroke of all, the New York legislature in 1870 reduced the tolls for wheat on the Erie Canal from six to three cents a bushel.⁸⁶

The stubborn tenacity of the owners of the schooners, the new screw steamers and the steam barges not only conserved the prosperity of the Lake cities, but was of indispensable value to the Middle West as a competitive check upon the railways. Whenever they could avoid this competition, the trunk lines shamelessly gouged the farmers and other shippers. Year after year they shoved up their freight rates, as soon as November came and ice closed the ports, by from one third to two thirds; and year after year they reverted to an honest competitive level when April released the vessels.⁸⁷ The war between the two transportation agencies steadily

⁸⁵ Merk, *Economic History of Wisconsin*, 384.

⁸⁶ Merk, *Economic History*, chap. xv.

⁸⁷ These were also the years in which sailing ships were being steadily crowded out by steam vessels. J. C. Mills, *Our Inland Seas* (Chicago, 1910), 158.

continued, and though the rail rates never reached so low a point, in general, as the water rates, the quickness and safety of land transit gave it an advantage. Finally, by 1875, a fair balance had been reached. By that year the carriage of ores had attained a volume which gave the lake vessels a great new field of employment.

Much more complete was the railway conquest of the Mississippi.⁸⁸ Before the war ten million bushels of Western wheat had been annually shipped from New Orleans, while millions of dollars of Western corn, pork and beef went down the river to be sold in Southern markets. In those years St. Louis often showed the visitor a solid mile of steamboats lying in two or three tiers. The scene at New Orleans was one never to be forgotten. Now these days were as utterly gone as those of the Roman triremes. Mark Twain, crossing under the shadow of the mighty Eads bridge at St. Louis early in the seventies, saw only a half-dozen inert steamboats, a mile of empty wharves and a drunken Negro. From the long reach of plank wharves at New Orleans the steamboats had almost vanished.⁸⁹ In the sixties the tonnage plying the Mississippi fell from 468,210 to 398,296, and it became far more largely than before a commerce of the upper river, not of the entire channel from Dubuque to New Orleans. The river boats acted merely as local carriers, distributing their cargoes to the railway terminals scattered along the banks. The river, in other words, became a mere feeder to dozens of railways. With some exaggeration Mark Twain summarized the contrast between the old days and the new:

Boat used to land . . . captain on hurricane roof . . . mighty stiff and straight . . . iron ramrod for a spine . . . kid gloves, plug tile, hair parted behind . . . man on shore takes off hat and says: "Got twenty-eight tons of wheat, capt'n . . . be great favor if you can take them." Captain says: "I'll take two of them . . ." and don't even condescend to look at him. But nowadays the captain takes off his old slouch, and smiles all the way round to the back of his ears, and gets off a bow which he hasn't got any ramrod to interfere with, and says: "Glad to see you, Smith, glad to see you—you're looking well—haven't

⁸⁸ For river steamboating see G. B. Merrick, *Old Times on the Upper Mississippi* (Cleveland, 1908); same author, "Joseph Reynolds and the Diamond Jo Line of Steamers, 1862-1911," *Miss. Valley Hist. Assoc., Proceeds.*, VIII 217-261; E. W. Gould, *Fifty Years on the Mississippi* (St. Louis, 1889).

⁸⁹ S. L. Clemens (Mark Twain, *pseud.*), *Life on the Mississippi* (Hartford, 1874), chap. xxii.

seen you looking so well for years—what you got for us?" "Nuth'n," says Smith; and keeps his hat on, and just turns back and goes to talking with somebody else.⁹⁰

For years the old-time interests nourished by Mississippi commerce refused to accept the doom which had fallen upon them. They declared that all would be well if the rapids near Keokuk were overcome and the silt bars at the mouth of the river cleared away; they persuaded Congress to dredge and light the channel as never before, and it spent millions on the Eads jetties. St. Louis even erected elevators on the river and established a barge line to New Orleans. Several powerful corporations were formed to place large fleets upon the river and to handle them with all the economy of large-scale management. Among these were the famous "Diamond Jo" line, organized by Joseph Reynolds near the close of the sixties, and the Northwestern Union Packet Company, which came into existence in 1866 through the exertions of Commodore William F. Davidson. But the position of all these lines was essentially weak and even the barging business was more and more heavily invaded by the railroads. The Mississippi by 1873 had ceased to be a great highway.

It would be expected that the position of labor, in this period of thriving industry, would be one of great prosperity; and viewed superficially, this seemed the fact. Work was abundant and wages were firm or rising. Men talked with wonder of the high pay which skilled employees were receiving. Rumor exaggerated the returns obtained by labor, while employers, as ever in flush periods, had much to say of the money the working class spent on liquor, fine clothes, jewelry and parlor organs.⁹¹ But when investigators looked beneath this bright surface they found a very different state of affairs. It can be summarized in Commissioner Wells's succinct statement at the close of 1866 that while the average wage had risen about sixty per cent since 1860, the increase in the cost of commodities was about ninety per cent, while in computing the cost of living a still greater rise in house rents had to be considered. Wells found that only a single working group, the copper miners, enjoyed the advantage of doubled wages in facing a doubled cost of living. Innumerable workmen—the ready-made clothing workers, the farm laborers of the North and West, and so on—obtained only half again as much

⁹⁰ Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* (N. Y., 1911), 433.

⁹¹ *N. Y. Eve. Post*, July 13, 1865; *Am. Ann. Cyclop.*, IX (1869), 260 ff.

as before the war.⁹² Nor was this a merely transient pinch. Two years later, when a momentary depression was making business men uneasy, it was still more evident that the workingmen had actually suffered a loss from the economic changes produced by the war. For all their apparently enhanced reward, skilled employees could be found living in shabbier and less sanitary homes than formerly—sometimes eating plainer fare. Commissioner Wells again asserted that the great majority of wage-earners were worse off than in 1860.⁹³

Ordinary workmen of intelligence in the larger cities were glad to get \$2 a day. The whistles everywhere sounded at seven a.m., at noon an hour was allowed and at six in the evening the ten-hour day was finished. In some trades the hours were a little shorter, but in others a good deal more. Thus in New York the drivers of horse cars and stages labored, in blazing heat or biting cold, twelve or even sixteen hours a day for two dollars, while hotel or livery drivers toiled an equal period for from ten dollars and fifty cents to twelve dollars a week. The lot of women employees was often bitterly hard. When peace came, New York had not less than fifteen thousand working women whose weekly pittance did not rise above three dollars and fifty cents or four dollars. They were employed in shops, factories and large stores and they had reason to count themselves happier than the thousands of wretched women, sisters to Tom Hood's slaving seamstress, who carried materials home and made shirts and overalls for seventy-five cents a dozen. Girls in the drygoods stores of the great Eastern cities, where civilization was proudest of its achievements, toiled from seven thirty in the morning till the closing hour of nine or ten, without seats, without rest rooms or facilities for a quiet lunch, without more consideration than dumb animals received; and for this health-ruining drudgery many were paid five dollars a week.⁹⁴

It was therefore no impulse of perversity, as some employers suggested, which led at once to a concerted movement for shorter hours and better pay. Ira Steward, a self-educated Boston machinist, indignant at the overwork he saw all about him and imbued with the ideas of John Stuart Mill, became the foremost apostle of a wide-

⁹² Special Commissioner of Revenue, *Report for December, 1866*, 14 ff.; *N. Y. Eve. Post and N. Y. Herald*, Jan. 4, 1867, for comment.

⁹³ Special Commissioner of Revenue, *Report for December, 1868*; *Nation*, IX, July 15, 1869.

⁹⁴ *N. Y. Eve. Post*, July 13, 1865.

spread agitation for an eight-hour day.⁹⁵ Eight Hour Leagues were formed in various states, a national congress met at Baltimore in 1866, and labor pressure carried through six legislatures laws which established eight hours as the legal day, unless other hours were agreed upon. These statutes proved futile, but the movement, by calling forcible attention to some of the grave abuses which labor endured, had its decided value. Another expression of the growing labor discontent lay in the vigorous movement for distributive co-operation on the Rochdale plan, an outgrowth of Socialistic and Fourieristic philosophy. Coöperative stores were set up to sell groceries, meat, drygoods and footwear to workmen, while many workers, in the years 1866-1869, tried to open small factories and produce wares coöperatively. Bakers went into the breadmaking business; coach makers combined to make and sell vehicles; coal miners, shipwrights, glass blowers, hat makers, tailors, printers and many others embarked in business for themselves. Most important of all were the coöperative stove foundries established in Rochester, Troy, Pittsburgh, Louisville, Cleveland, Chicago and other cities in 1866-1867 under the leadership of William H. Sylvius, president of the Molders' International Union.⁹⁶ Some of these undertakings were financially successful, but the basic difficulty was that they tended to turn into old-style capitalistic enterprises, the owners hiring new workmen on a wage basis.

The best weapon of underpaid, overworked labor was after all, not legislative action nor coöperation but a trade union powerful enough to call an effective strike. Though by 1870 there were more than thirty national unions with a total membership of perhaps three hundred thousand, and though the year 1866 witnessed the formation of the National Labor Union as a result of Sylvius's efforts, there was still little militant labor action. Strikes were few in number, frowned upon by public opinion, and for the most part abortive. Many organizations fell into quick decay, the National Labor Union going to pieces in the years 1870-1872.⁹⁷ In many respects the most

⁹⁵ J. R. Commons and Associates, *History of Labour in the United States* (N. Y., 1921), II, 87 ff.; 124 ff., 138-139; F. T. Carlton, *The History and Problems of Organized Labor* (N. Y., 1921), 63; J. R. Commons and others, *Documentary History of American Industrial Society* (Cleveland, 1910-1911), IX, 26.

⁹⁶ J. C. Sylvius, *The Life, Speeches, Labors and Essays of William H. Sylvius* (Phila., 1872); Commons and Associates, *Labour in the United States*, II, 111.

⁹⁷ Mary Beard, *A Short History of the American Labor Movement* (N. Y., 1920), 72 ff.; Commons and Associates, *Labour in the United States*, II, chap. iv.

impressive of the bodies formed in the first decade after the war was the Knights of St. Crispin, the shoemakers' organization. It was a natural response to the introduction of the factory system into the shoe industry and its chief initial object was to protect the skilled journeyman against the competition of green hands and apprentices. Established in Milwaukee early in 1867, it spread like a prairie fire before a gale, until by the spring of 1872 there were no fewer than three hundred and twenty-seven lodges. The Crispins for a time conducted strikes with impressive success, waging a series of victorious battles in Lynn, Worcester, Philadelphia and San Francisco; but after an unsuccessful strike at Lynn in 1872, the order was gradually beaten back by the employers.⁹⁸ Throughout these years the organization of unions and the conduct of strikes were grievously hampered by the inrush of immigrant workers, many of them skilled and all ready to accept employment under conditions which American labor found unsatisfactory.

This sullen discontent on the part of a great mass of workers, these attempts to seize upon one remedy after another—of one, the organization of the Knights of Labor in 1869, we shall hear a great deal more—represented part of the dark reverse of the bright shield of industrial prosperity and expansion. Another gloomy aspect of the business rush and whirl lay in the frequent dishonesty, the sharp manipulation and the ever-growing tendency toward speculative excesses, which accompanied it. Still another lay in the private extravagance, the relaxation of moral standards and the vulgarization of taste which it encouraged from Boston to Omaha. The war, which had done so much to create the era of inflation and abounding prosperity, had also introduced many elements of confusion and recklessness into American life and thrown off old restraints. But for the time the great body of Americans, intent upon dipping their cups into the golden stream, overlooked all this. They thought only of the humming mills, the smoking factories, the magic birth of new cities and towns all over the West, the throng of immigrants from Europe, the atmosphere of optimism and cheer. The nation had never seemed so busy, its future never so bright. There was faith everywhere; but after the stunning disasters of 1873, so suddenly to follow, men wondered how they could have been so credulous.

⁹⁸ D. D. Lescohier, *The Knights of St. Crispin, 1867-1874* (Univ. of Wis., Econ. and Pol. Sci. Series, VII, 1910, no. 1).

WALTER PRESCOTT WEBB

THE DIVERSITY of environment which produced strongly marked sectionalism in this country in politics, art, and economic developments has resulted also in a growth of regionalism within the historical profession. The weaknesses and strengths which accrue to a native son attempting an objective appraisal of a geographic section to which he has sentimental ties have been observed in the work of such historians as U. B. Phillips and Frederick Jackson Turner. Special insight is theirs, but frequently at the cost of nearsightedness. The unique attributes of a section are seen clearly, but what is common to other parts of the country tends to be ignored. If virtues are carefully documented, limitations are often overlooked.

Yet to suggest that sectional loyalties disqualify a writer from his chosen field is like asserting that research in American history should be left to Europeans. If regional histories are to be written, and no one doubts their value, the initial efforts should come from those with the greatest natural interest. The case must be stated before it can be criticized. Frederick Turner had to call attention to the influence of the frontier before eastern historians could suggest modifications of his hypothesis.

Walter Prescott Webb's *The Great Plains*, published in 1931, is in the best tradition of regional writing. It states a case forcibly and provocatively, with an insight born of deep affection. The author proposed to show that the geographic conditions existing west of the ninety-eighth meridian were so different from those to the east as to effect substantial alterations in what had been

the traditional methods of pioneering and living. This area, extending roughly from central Kansas to the Pacific coast mountains and from the Canadian to the Mexican border, Webb calls "The Great Plains." Each part of the region had at least two of the three physical characteristics which differentiated the section as a whole: aridity, an absence of forests, and level surfaces of great extent.

These conditions, the author believes, profoundly affected practically every American institution with which they came in contact, and created a unique western way of life. This was reflected in the fact that westward expansion had to stop at the edge of the area until new tools, such as the revolver, were invented to assist in its occupation. When the settlers arrived, they found it essential to change land laws, old modes of farming, methods of dealing with water and even with justice to conform to the environment. Interestingly enough, Webb finds that the industrial developments which made possible a unique plains culture also contained the seeds of its destruction. The railroads provided distant markets for Texas cattle, but they also cut the plains into segments and brought the farmers whose barbed wire put a final end to the open ranges.

The criticisms which have been made of *The Great Plains* do not concern the accepted fact that ways of living had to be modified in the West but rather the question of whether the author exaggerated the changes and the uniqueness of the resulting society. The book as a whole was devoted to a search for differences, leaving unwritten what could be said about the continuing patterns of American culture. If aridity was important to Texas, were not Christianity, capitalism, and representative government even more so? If the author is to be defended by the observation that such themes were not his concern in this study, the book must be accepted not as a definition of western culture but as a description of its special characteristics. Even the extent to which it was "singularly unique" is difficult to determine in

the absence of an analysis of the relative importance of the old and the new.

Suggestions have been made concerning Webb's definition of the plains area. Although the author designates three subregions, critics have felt that his generalizations take insufficient account of the significant differences within "The Great Plains." Actually, on close examination, the subregion of the "High Plains," consisting of a large part of Texas and the country west and north of it, is often made synonymous with the whole. Others have pointed out the possible distortion of such an arbitrary boundary as the ninety-eighth meridian. The question has also been raised whether Webb's geographical determinism did not preclude adequate attention to definitive factors such as the ethnic background of the settlers, the time of settlement, and the state of national politics, any of which might indicate the propriety of another kind of division.

Webb acknowledged that he approached the writing of this book with deep feeling. Although this is not the mood which is theoretically associated with historical writing, it has contributed to the vividness and originality of many significant books, among them Webb's. There are necessarily many divisions of labor among the historians. Perhaps one of the most fundamental is the division between those whose enthusiastic insight leads to useful, even if overstated, hypotheses, and those whose faculties are critical rather than creative. To the former group such regional historians as Webb are probably glad to belong.

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The Cattle Kingdom

Cowboy, cattleman, cowpuncher, it matters not what name others have given him, he has remained—himself. . . . He never dreamed he was a hero.—EMERSON HOUGH

In the excitement of a stampede a man was not himself, and his horse was not the horse of yesterday. Man and horse were one, and the combination accomplished feats that would be utterly impossible under ordinary circumstances.—CHARLES GOODNIGHT

Whoopie ti yi yo, git along little dogies,
It's your misfortune, and none of my own.
Whoopie ti yi yo, git along little dogies,
For you know Wyoming will be your new home.¹
Trail Song

IN THE preceding pages emphasis has been placed upon the fact that the Great Plains presented an obstacle to the pioneering American which altered his established methods and threw him for a time into confusion. For a greater part of half a century the frontier line was held practically stationary along the vicinity of the ninety-eighth meridian. During this period—which lasted, roughly, from 1840 to 1885—the agricultural frontier first jumped across the Plains, established itself on the Pacific slope, and then began to work backward into the Plains. The last stage of frontiering consisted, therefore, of a movement from both the east and the west into the Great Plains.

New inventions and discoveries had to be made before the pioneer farmer could go into the Great Plains and establish himself. To the farmer, then, the Great Plains presented an obstacle which he could not, at the time he first confronted it, overcome. In time the Indus-

Reprinted from *The Great Plains* by Walter Prescott Webb, by permission of Ginn and Company.

¹ From John A. Lomax, *Cowboy Songs*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

trial Revolution was to develop agencies that enabled him to go forward and solve the problems of water and fence and extensive agriculture which hitherto had been insoluble. While these inventions and adaptations were being worked out, improved, and perfected, the agricultural frontier stood at ease, or, more aptly, stamped about in uneasiness along the borders of the Plains country. In the interval of awaiting the Industrial Revolution there arose in the Plains country the cattle kingdom.

The cattle kingdom was a world within itself, with a culture all its own, which, though of brief duration, was complete and self-satisfying. The cattle kingdom worked out its own means and methods of utilization; it formulated its own law, called the code of the West, and did it largely upon extra-legal grounds. The existence of the cattle kingdom for a generation is the best single bit of evidence that here in the West were the basis and the promise of a new civilization unlike anything previously known to the Anglo-European-American experience. The Easterner, with his background of forest and farm, could not always understand the man of the cattle kingdom. One went on foot, the other went on horseback; one carried his law in books, the other carried it strapped round his waist. One represented tradition, the other represented innovation; one responded to convention, the other responded to necessity and evolved his own conventions. Yet the man of the timber and the town made the law for the man of the plain; the plainsman, finding this law unsuited to his needs, broke it, and was called lawless. The cattle kingdom was not sovereign, but subject. Eventually it ceased to be a kingdom and became a province. The Industrial Revolution furnished the means by which the beginnings of this original and distinctive civilization have been destroyed or reduced to vestigial remains. Since the destruction of the Plains Indians and the buffalo civilization, the cattle kingdom is the most logical thing that has happened in the Great Plains, where, in spite of science and invention, the spirit of the Great American Desert still is manifest.

In this chapter an attempt will be made to show the setting for the cattle kingdom, to explain how it arose naturally out of conditions peculiar to the setting, and, if possible, to make clear that the ways of cattlemen, cowboys, and horses in the Great Plains were as

logical both in their existence and in their actions as those of bankers, clerks, and steamboats in another environment. Finally, some attention must be given to the forces that operated to destroy the cattle kingdom. To trace the rise and fall of what might have been a Plains civilization, the happy episode in the history of the Great Plains, is the theme of this chapter.

1. THE ORIGIN OF THE KINGDOM

The cattle kingdom had its origin in Texas before the Civil War. After the war it expanded, and by 1876 it had spread over the entire Plains area. The physical basis of the cattle kingdom was grass, and it extended itself over all the grassland not occupied by farms. Within a period of ten years it had spread over western Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico; that is, over all or a part of twelve states. For rapidity of expansion there is perhaps not a parallel to this movement in American history.

There is no purpose here of seeking the ultimate origin of men's association with cattle and control of cattle. It is sufficient to show that this association, as found in the United States, took a direction in the Great Plains not found in the timbered region to the east or to the west. So far as American history is concerned, ranching as practiced on the Great Plains after 1866 was distinctive. The remarkable feature is that it has conformed in its territorial delimitations very closely to the semi-arid portion of the Great Plains country.

In the final analysis the cattle kingdom arose at that place where men began to manage cattle on horseback. It was the use of the horse that primarily distinguished ranching in the West from stock-farming in the East. We have already seen that the Mexicans were horsemen and that the Plains Indians were horsemen. We have seen that when the Texans settled in the Colorado River bottom they had to learn a new method of horsemanship and adopt new weapons in order to meet the Plains Indians and the Mexicans on an equal footing. In the study of the Spanish civilization we saw that San Antonio was an important Spanish center of civilization; that it stood on the margin of the Plains country. We know that the Spaniards had followed herding and cattle-raising to a limited

extent in their expansion over the vast semi-arid country lying north of the *Mesa Central*. Therefore we should naturally expect to find the rudiments of ranching as followed by the Americans first making their appearance in that region where the Texans found themselves in contact with the Plains country in the vicinity of prior Spanish and Mexican occupation; that is to say, the beginnings should be sought in the region south of San Antonio and west of the Colorado River.

In preceding pages much care was taken to explain that south of San Antonio the plain swings to the southeast, causing the timber line to meet the Gulf coast in the vicinity of Matagorda Bay, near the old town of Indianola. For the sake of clarity we may describe the territory in question as a diamond-shaped area, elongated north and south. The southern point of the diamond (the southern tip of Texas) is formed by the convergence of the Gulf coast and the Rio Grande. San Antonio forms the apex of the northern angle, and lines drawn from San Antonio to the Gulf coast on the east and to Laredo on the Rio Grande on the west form the upper sides of the diamond. San Antonio, Old Indianola, Brownsville, and Laredo form the four points of the diamond. This restricted area was the cradle of the Western cattle business, an incubator in which throve and multiplied Mexican longhorns, Indian horses, and American cowboys. Here American men began handling cattle on horseback, just as they had already begun fighting Indians and Mexicans on horseback. In this region and on its borders were to be found all the elements essential to the ranch and range cattle industry.

First, it will be noted that the San Antonio-Indianola line runs parallel to the Colorado River valley and separates the timber of the Colorado from the southern sweep of the semi-arid plain and scrub brush land. In the timber of the Colorado valley dwelt, after 1821, the Anglo-Americans of Austin's colony and of the neighboring colonies. There were the future cowboys—men who were already learning to ride horseback in Mexican fashion. At San Antonio was an old Spanish civilization which had become Mexican and which for long had felt itself in constant danger from the Plains Indians. From San Antonio to the Rio Grande at Laredo the country had been occupied after a fashion by Spaniards. Laredo was founded in

1755, and after that date the country between the Rio Grande and the Nueces was given over to herds of cattle, horses, and sheep. The Nueces valley, which passes through the region in a southeasterly direction, was the center of this early Spanish industry in Texas. The southeast side of the diamond was formed by the Gulf coast.

On the northeast side of the diamond, then, stood the future cowboys; on the southwest line were the Mexican cattle; on the southeast the Gulf gave protection, formed a barrier, and offered an outlet by sea; but the empire of grass lay above and beyond the northwestern side of the diamond, guarded only by Indians on horseback and at the time occupied by their own herds—the buffalo. Wild horses were on the open plains, offering free mounts to any who could ride sufficiently well.

This diamond-shaped region offered almost perfect conditions for the raising of cattle. The country was open, with mottes of timber offering shade and protection. Grass was plentiful, and in parts remained green throughout the year. The climate was mild, almost tropical, and there was neither snow nor blizzard, though an occasional norther swept down, only to fade and fail under the benign influences of the southern sun and the warm Gulf. The region was fairly well watered, particularly in the beautiful Nueces valley, through which ran a living stream bordered by natural parks; but, what was more important, because of its position it was sheltered from the inroads of the Plains Indians. To reach the Nueces valley the Indians had to pass around San Antonio, skirt the timber (which they would not enter), and then bear south and east. The country was a little too rough for them, too far from their home on the High Plains, and there was too much risk of their being cut off on the return journey. To them the Nueces valley was of the nature of a *cul-de-sac*, and consequently as a rule they let it alone. Therefore the Mexican rancheros there did well with their flocks and herds until the Americans came.

Then in 1836 came the Texas revolution. During this time and throughout the period of the republic (1836-1845) the Nueces valley became the scene of border war between the Texans of the Colorado and the Mexicans of the Rio Grande. In the long run the Texans had the best of it, and the Mexicans found the land north of the

Rio Grande untenable. They abandoned their ranches and much of their stock and retired from the scene. The Texans pushed out into the cattle country and took charge of what the Mexicans had left behind. The republic declared all unbranded cattle public property, and the Texans began to convert these roving herds into private property by putting their own stamp on them with a branding iron.²

It is not meant to imply that all the cattle were of Mexican and Spanish origin or that many of them were without owners: the immigrants to Texas brought their own stock, oxen and milch cows, and the cows frequently carried the yoke like the oxen. Some cattle were also brought in by the French from Louisiana. The bulk of the cattle, however, were Spanish. It was estimated that in the year 1830 Texas had one hundred thousand head. Four fifths of the occupied area was stocked with Spanish cattle, and one fifth with American cattle.³ In all probability the cattle of the Nueces and the Rio Grande valley were of practically pure Spanish stock, whereas the American cattle were held in the settlements of the Colorado and Brazos.

From the time of the Texas revolution until the Civil War, cattle grew wild in Texas and multiplied at a rapid and constant rate. Sporadic attempts were made to market these cattle in New Orleans, in California after the gold rush, and even in the North; but nothing about the industry was standardized until after the Civil War. The cattle had little more value than the wild animals of the Plains. The history of cattle in southern Texas from the Texas revolution to the Civil War is summed up very briefly as follows:

In 1837 and 1838 the "cowboys" gathered herds of from three hundred to a thousand head of the wild unbranded cattle of the Nueces and Rio Grande country, and drove them for sale to cities of the interior. In 1842 the driving of cattle to New Orleans began. The first shipment from Texas was by a Morgan steamer in 1848, but up to 1849 there were very few outlets for the stock, which had increased enormously since 1830. There is a report of a drive of 1500 to Missouri in 1842, but the earliest perfectly authenticated record of a business venture of that kind found was for 1846, when Edward

² Tenth Census of the United States (1880), *Report upon the Statistics of Agriculture*, p. 965.

³ *Ibid.*

Piper . . . drove 1000 head of Texas cattle to Ohio, where he fed and sold them. From 1846 to 1861 the drives increased. In 1850 drives began to California. The first drive to Chicago was in 1856. From the beginning of the northern drives in 1846 until the war of the rebellion there was always some movement of cattle out of Texas, but it was irregular. A large proportion of the cattle driven was sold on the plains. Some cattle went into California, Arizona, and New Mexico. Besides such drives there were only the shipments from the seaboard cities to New Orleans and Cuba.⁴

But these early drives and sales, by land and by sea, were not only irregular but inconsequential. The stock in the Nueces valley continued to increase; the valley became, in fact, a veritable hive from which the cattle swarmed to the north and west. The estimate of 1830 gave Texas 100,000 head, the census of 1850 gave it 330,000 head, and that of 1860 gave it 3,535,768 head. On this basis the increase from 1830 to 1850 was only about 330 per cent, but in the next ten years it was 1070 per cent. One investigator judged in 1880 that the number for 1860 should have been 4,785,400 head. If this number is correct, then the increase for the decade 1850 to 1860 would amount to 1450 per cent. Whether such figures violate the biological law governing cattle or prove the estimates and enumeration wrong does not greatly concern us. There is no disputing the fact that cattle were multiplying in southern Texas (and most of them were still in southern Texas) at a rate that would make some disposition of them in the near future imperative if they were not to become a pest. Even as early as 1849 a ranchman of Live Oak County found the country overrun with wild, unbranded cattle, and wrote that "upon the prairies he had often come upon old branding-irons, unrecognized by the people living there." Each

⁴ Tenth Census, *Statistics of Agriculture*, p. 965. In this census is a special "Report on Cattle, Sheep, and Swine, supplementary to the Enumeration of Live Stock on Farms in 1880." This report was based on careful investigation made by Clarence Gordon, special agent in charge, and others. In addition to information drawn from the census, the investigators obtained material from ranchmen and army officers throughout the West. Unfortunately the sources of information are rarely given, and there is no bibliography. However, the report has the validity of a primary source, the best available, and doubtless presents an accurate picture of conditions existing at the time the census was taken. The field work was begun in August, 1879, and was completed in 1881. Hundreds of names are listed under "Acknowledgments," representing every section of the cattle country.

Plains Indian created the mounted Texas Ranger and compelled the Texan to recognize the six-shooter as his own weapon, then the Texas longhorn kept him on horseback and rendered the six-shooter desirable after the Indian had departed.

The value of the six-shooter to the man who handled these cattle is brought out in the following incident, which occurred about 1860.

On this occasion it became necessary or desirable to rope a large and powerful steer, with horns long and well set for hooking and sharp as a lance. He showed fight and would not drive to the pen, and a young man galloped forth from the crowd on a fleet horse and roped him. But before the steer could be thrown, the lasso being put to the horn of the saddle, he jerked the horse down, and in the fall one leg of the rider was caught beneath him. The young man spurred with the loose foot, but the horse, being stunned by the fall, was unable to get up and held his rider pinned to the ground. The steer having been "brought up" at the end of the rope by the fall of the horse, and seeing both horse and rider prostrate on the prairie, turned and with neck bowed, charged upon them. It was an awful moment. There appeared no escape, as the party was some distance away, and the whole thing was the work of a moment. Some persons in such a situation would have been paralyzed—would have lost all presence of mind. But not so with the young man: His hand was instantly on his revolver, and drawing it he shot the furious animal through the brain, when the delay of a moment would have been fatal.⁸

Thus we see the elements of the cattle industry of the West coming together in the Nueces country, the southern point of the great Plains. There Mexican cattle came into the presence of the mounted Texan armed with rope and six-shooter—the cowboy.⁹ But as yet the area was limited and regular markets were nonexistent. Indians and buffaloes still roamed over the empire of grass on the Plains. In the meantime industrial giants were arising in the North—giant cities hungry for meat. The agricultural South was much nearer, but now prostrate before the industrial North. Then the

⁸ D. E. McArthur, *The Cattle Industry of Texas, 1685-1918* (manuscript), pp. 84-85.

⁹ The task of writing the history of the beginnings of the range and ranch cattle industry in southern Texas is one that defies the investigator. The work of McArthur was promising, but is still in manuscript. *A Vaquero of the Brush Country*, by John Young and J. Frank Dobie, gives some idea of conditions in southern Texas following the Civil War, but does not treat of the early period.

cattle swarmed, passed out of the valley along the timber line, on the natural highway of the prairie, by San Antonio, Austin, Fort Worth, on and on, taking meat to the giants of the North—the first tie to rebind the North and the South after the Civil War.

2. THE SPREAD OF THE KINGDOM

We have no statistics as to the number of cattle in Texas in 1865. The census for 1860, as we saw, gives 3,535,768, which a later estimate raised to 4,785,400. The census of 1870 gives the number on farms at 3,990,158, whereas the actual figures probably ran a million more, making approximately 5,000,000 head. We know that at that time these cattle must have been confined to the eastern settlements and the old region of the Nueces in southwest Texas. We are quite certain that practically no cattle were at that time west of the ninety-ninth meridian. Even in the census of 1880, after the kingdom had spread, we find that out of a total of 4,894,698 cattle in Texas, only 731,827 head were to the west of the hundredth meridian, whereas 4,162,871 were east of that meridian, and of that number 221,597 were in the small area south of the Nueces.¹⁰

The price situation in 1865 was as follows: cattle in Texas could be bought for \$3 and \$4 per head, on the average; but even so, there were no buyers. The same cattle in the Northern markets would have brought \$30 or \$40, "and mature Texas beeves which cost in Texas \$5 each by the herd were worth \$50 each in other sections of the United States."¹¹ It was easy for a Texan with a pencil and a piece of paper to "figure up" a fortune. If he could buy five million cattle at \$4 and sell them in the North at \$40 each, his gross profit would amount to the sum of \$180,000,000 on an investment of \$20,000,000 plus the cost of transportation! This exercise in high finance is, of course, fanciful, but it does show what men did on a small scale. Five million cattle? No. Three thousand? Yes. Profit, \$108,000. How the Texans needed the money in those hard days! They took vigorous measures to connect the four-dollar cow with a forty-dollar market. As a matter of fact they did within fifteen years actually deliver to the North the five million head of cattle, and more, though the actual profits fell short

¹⁰ Tenth Census, *Statistics of Agriculture*, table on page 985.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 966.

of the paper figures. At the same time the number of cattle remaining on the breeding ground in Texas was greater than before by more than eight hundred thousand head.

When the Texans started their rangy longhorns northward—and they were fortunate in having such tough customers for such a perilous journey—they had no intention of setting up a new economic kingdom: they were merely carrying their herds to market. The fact that the market happened to be twelve or fifteen hundred miles away was no fault of theirs. And if we follow the history of their drives for five years, we see that they were groping, experimenting, trying this and that, until by the familiar system of trial and error, which characterized all progress in the Plains country, they came at length, and after great sacrifice, upon success. They beat out the trail, learned to avoid the timber and the farmer, to whip the Indian, to cross the quicksanded rivers; they reached the railroad, found buyers and a steady market, and heard once more the music made by real money rattling in the pocket. And the North had meat, sometimes tough and unsavory, but the worst of it good enough for factory workers and the pick-and-shovel men of the railroads and too good for the Indians of the reservation under the corrupt régime of Grant Republicans.

As has been stated, the purpose of the Texans in making the first drives to the north was to find a market for their cattle. Their immediate objective was a railhead from which the cattle could be shipped East. An examination of the railroad maps of 1866 will show that several railroads had nosed their way across the Mississippi and followed population to the edge of the Great Plains. Among these roads was the Missouri Pacific, which had reached Sedalia, Missouri.

It is estimated that two hundred and sixty thousand head of Texas cattle crossed Red River for the northern markets in 1866. The objective of most of these herds was Sedalia, Missouri, which offered rail facilities to St. Louis and other cities. But disaster awaited the Texans and their herds in southeastern Kansas, southern Missouri, and northern Arkansas, where armed mobs met the herds with all possible violence.¹² The pretext for this opposition

¹² J. G. McCoy's *Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest* is the pioneer work on the Texas cattle drive, and has been used by all later

was that the cattle would bring the Texas fever among Northern cattle, but in some cases, at least, robbery and theft were the real motives.

The southwestern Missouri roads leading to Sedalia were the scenes of the worst of the work of these outlaws. . . . When outright murder was not resorted to as the readiest means of getting possession of a herd of cattle, drovers were flogged until they had promised to abandon their stock, mount their horses, and get out of the country as quick as they could. A favorite scheme of the milder-mannered of these scoundrels to plunder the cattlemen was that of stampeding a herd at night. This was easily done, and having been done the rogues next morning would collect as many of the scattered cattle as they could, secrete them in an out-of-the-way place,—much of the country being hilly and timbered—and then hunt up the owner and offer to help him, for an acceptable money consideration per head, in recovering his lost property. If the drover agreed to pay a price high enough to satisfy the pirates, they next day would return with many, if not all, of the missing cattle; but if not, the hold-ups would keep them, and later take them to the market and pocket the entire proceeds.¹³

The Texas drovers soon learned to avoid this region. Some turned to the east and others to the west, away from the bandit-infested country around Baxter Springs. Those who turned east did so in the northeastern part of the Indian Territory, driving along the Missouri-Arkansas boundary and laying their course toward St. Louis or some rail point east of Sedalia. This route had few attractions. The country was timbered and broken, and the cattle reached the market in poor condition. Other drovers turned west along the southern boundary of Kansas for one hundred and fifty miles, until they were beyond the settlements and well out on the grassy plains. When far enough north they turned eastward, most of them reaching the railroad at St. Joseph, Missouri, and shipping direct to Chicago. Other cattle found their way to feeding pens in Iowa and Illinois. To the west some cattle went as far north as Wyoming.¹⁴

writers in the field. *The Prose and Poetry of the Live Stock Industry of the United States*, prepared by authority of the National Live Stock Association, is perhaps the most thorough and comprehensive work on the subject. Trail-driving is discussed on pages 431 ff. of the last-named work.

¹³ *Prose and Poetry of the Live Stock Industry of the United States*, p. 433; McCoy, *Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest*, Chap. II.

¹⁴ McArthur, *The Cattle Industry of Texas*, p. 144.

On the whole the season of 1866 was disastrous to the Texans. It was a year of groping experiment, trial, and error. But one clear fact emerges from the welter of uncertainty of that year, and that is that the cattle trail for the future would lie to the west. Ferocious Plains Indians were there on horseback, but they were to be preferred to the Missourians. Why the Texans who had raised their cattle on the prairies, or, at least, gathered them there, did not immediately realize that it would be best to drive on the prairie may seem strange; yet what they had done was perfectly natural, namely, to seek the most direct route to market. In spite of the losses which most of them experienced, the drovers saw that they had an unlimited market for their cattle if they could only find a way of getting them safely through. They met buyers as well as thieves. Their future problem was to establish permanent relations with the buyers and avoid—or, better, kill, as they sometimes did—the thieves.

The man who first saw the desirability of establishing a permanent and fairly safe point of contact between the Eastern buyer and the Texan drover was J. G. McCoy, who, with his two brothers, was engaged in a large live-stock shipping business in Illinois. McCoy, a dreamer with a practical bent, conceived the notion that there must be a strategic point where the cattle trail from Texas would cut the railroads then pushing west. At this point of intersection Texas cattle drovers would be met by Northern and Eastern buyers, and all would prosper together. "The plan," says McCoy, "was to establish at some accessible point a depot or market to which a Texan drover could bring his stock unmolested, and there, failing to find a buyer, he could go upon the public highways to any market in the country he wished. In short, it was to establish a market whereat the Southern drover and Northern buyer would meet upon an equal footing, and both be undisturbed by mobs or swindling thieves."¹⁵ In other words, McCoy proposed to establish, and did establish, the first cow town of the West—Abilene, Kansas. This act constituted the third step in the founding of the cattle kingdom.

¹⁵ J. G. McCoy, *Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest*, p. 40.

At first McCoy was uncertain where this town should be, and he spent much time studying maps, trying to decide whether it should be on the Western prairies or on some Southern river. At this stage of his meditation a business trip took him to Kansas City, where he met some men who were interested in a herd of cattle reported to be coming up from Texas, destination unknown. McCoy became more interested. He went to Junction City and proposed to purchase land there for a stockyard, but found the price too high. He next made the rounds of the railroad offices. The president of the Kansas Pacific promised aid, but showed only mild enthusiasm for the plan, which he thought impractical. The president of the Missouri Pacific ordered McCoy out of his office, declaring that McCoy had no cattle, had never had any, and probably never would have any. A few hours later McCoy had signed a contract with the general freight agent of the Hannibal and St. Joe Railroad granting favorable rates from the Missouri River to Chicago. McCoy thought that this incident—the action of the official of the Missouri Pacific—turned the cattle business permanently from St. Louis to Chicago.

McCoy now had rail connection on the Kansas Pacific to the Missouri River, and thence on the Hannibal and St. Joe to Chicago and other markets farther east. He now hurried back to Kansas to select the site of his town on the Kansas Pacific. Neither Salina nor Solomon City was hospitable to the idea of being a cow town, and McCoy finally selected Abilene, the county seat of Dickinson County. In McCoy's words,

Abilene in 1867 was a very small, dead place, consisting of about one dozen log huts, low, small, rude affairs, four fifths of which were covered with dirt for roofing; indeed, but one shingle roof could be seen in the whole city. The business of the burg was conducted in two small rooms, mere log huts, and of course the inevitable saloon, also in a log hut, was to be found.¹⁶

Just how poor the town must have been is indicated by the fact that the saloon-keeper supplemented his income and provided himself amusement by tending a colony of prairie dogs and selling

¹⁶ *Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest*, p. 44. Abilene was far enough out on the Plains to use lumber sparingly.

them to Eastern tourists as curiosities. The time was near when the saloon-keepers of Abilene would have too much business to stoop to prairie-dog culture. However, the presence of the prairie-dog town tells us significantly that Abilene was across the line, a town of the West. Says McCoy:¹⁷

Abilene was selected because the country was entirely unsettled, well watered, excellent grass, and nearly the entire area of country was adapted to holding cattle.¹⁸ And it was the [farthest] point east at which a good depot for cattle business could have been made.

McCoy labored with energy, zeal and intelligence. Pine lumber was brought from Hannibal, Missouri, and hard wood from Lenape, Kansas. The work of building stockyards, pens, and loading shoots went forward rapidly, and within sixty days Abilene had facilities to accommodate three thousand head of cattle; but as yet it was a cow town without any cows.

McCoy had not overlooked the cows, however. As soon as he chose Abilene he sent to Kansas and the Indian Territory a man well versed in the geography of the country and "accustomed to life on the prairie." "with instructions to hunt up every straggling drove possible—and every drove was straggling, for they had nowhere to go—and tell the drovers of Abilene, and what was being done there toward making a market and outlet for Texan cattle." This man rode almost two hundred miles into the Indian Territory, cut the fresh trail of cattle going north, followed it, overtook the herd, and informed the owner that a good, safe place with adequate shipping facilities awaited him at Abilene.

This was joyous news to the drover, for the fear of trouble and violence hung like an incubus over his waking thoughts alike with his sleeping moments. It was almost too good to be believed; could it be possible that someone was about to afford a Texan drover any other reception than outrage and robbery? They were very suspicious that some trap was set, to be sprung on them; they were not ready to credit the proposition that the day of fair dealing had dawned for Texan drovers, and the era of mobs, brutal murder, and arbitrary proscription ended forever.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹⁸ McCoy means that the country was open and level and had plenty of grass for forage.

Yet they turned their herds toward the point designated, and slowly and cautiously moved on northward, their minds constantly agitated with hope and fear alternately.¹⁹

The first herd to reach Abilene was driven from Texas by a man named Thompson, but was sold to some Northern men in the Indian Territory and by them driven to Abilene. Another herd owned by Wilson, Wheeler, and Hicks, and en route for the Pacific states, stopped to graze near Abilene and was finally sold there. On the fifth of September the first cattle were shipped from Abilene to Chicago. A great celebration was held that night, attended by many stock-raisers and buyers brought by excursion from Springfield, Illinois, and other points. Southern men from Texas and Northern men from Lincoln's home town sat down to "feast, wine, and song," heralding the initiation of the cattle kingdom, which was to rise immediately after the fall of the cotton kingdom. Who can say that Abilene was less significant than Appomattox?

Despite the fact that the season was late when Abilene opened for business, thirty-five thousand head of cattle found their way to it, and one thousand cars of cattle were shipped east, all save seventeen cars going over the Kansas Pacific to Chicago and points farther east. Some of the cattle that season went as far as Albany, New York, where nine hundred head sold for \$300 less than the freight charges alone. The growth of the Northern cattle trade is told in the following table from the United States census of 1880:

TEXAS CATTLE DRIVES FROM 1866 TO 1880²⁰

For Sedalia, Missouri, but diverted by trouble about Texas cattle

1866	260,000	260,000
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To Abilene, Kansas

1867	35,000	
1868	75,000	
1869	350,000	
1870	300,000	
1871	<u>700,000</u>	1,460,000

¹⁹ McCoy, *Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest*, p. 51.

²⁰ The trail end shifted from Abilene westward as the railroads advanced. Figures are from the Tenth Census, *Statistics of Agriculture*, p. 975.

To Wichita and Ellsworth, Kansas			
1872	.....	350,000	
1873	.....	405,000	
1874	.....	166,000	
1875	.....	<u>151,618</u>	1,072,618
To Dodge City and Ellis, Kansas			
1876	.....	322,000	
1877	.....	201,159	
1878	.....	265,646	
1879	.....	<u>257,927</u>	1,046,732
To Dodge City, Caldwell, and Hunnewell, Kansas			
1880	.....	384,147	<u>384,147</u>
Total for fifteen years			4,223,497

Abilene! Abilene may be defined. It was the point where the north-and-south cattle trail intersected the east-and-west railroad. Abilene was more than a point. It is a symbol. It stands for all that happened when two civilizations met for conflict, for disorder, for the clashing of great currents which carry on their crest the turbulent and disorderly elements of both civilizations—in this case the rough characters of the plain and of the forest. On the surface Abilene was corruption personified. Life was hectic, raw, lurid, awful. But the dance hall, the saloon, and the red light, the dissonance of immoral revelry punctuated by pistol shots, were but the superficialities which hid from view the deeper forces that were working themselves out round the new town. If Abilene excelled all later cow towns in wickedness, it also excelled them in service,—the service of bartering the beef of the South for the money of the North.

Through Abilene passed a good part of the meat supply of a nation. That part of the story belongs to the East, and we are not concerned with it here. But Abilene's service was no less to the West. From Abilene and other like towns Texas cattle, blended with American cattle, swarmed out to the West and covered the Great Plains—the empire of grass—from the California mountains to the Illinois prairies. Not all the cattle that reached Abilene were fit for the market, and at times there was no market. In such cases the surplus cattle were "held on the prairie" or established on permanent ranches to be fattened.

In this way the cattle kingdom spread from Texas and utilized the Plains area, which would otherwise have lain idle and useless. Abilene offered the market; the market offered inducement to Northern money; Texas furnished the base stock, the original supply, and a method of handling cattle on horseback; the Plains offered free grass. From these conditions and from these elements emerged the range and ranch cattle industry, perhaps the most unique and distinctive institution that America has produced. This spread of the range cattle industry over the Great Plains is the final step in the creation of the cattle kingdom.

The first step was made when the Spaniards and Mexicans established their ranches in the Nueces country of southern Texas, where natural conditions produced a hardy breed of cattle that could grow wild; the second step occurred when the Texans took over these herds and learned to handle them in the only way they could have been handled—on horseback; the third step was taken when the cattle were driven northward to market; the fourth came when a permanent depot was set up at Abilene which enabled trail-driving to become standardized; the fifth took place when the overflow from the trail went west to the free grass of the Great Plains.²¹

²¹ The purpose here is to set forth the processes by which civilization came about on the Great Plains. We are well aware that the Texans did not take the first cattle to the northern Plains; the Spaniards, of course, took the first. The Mormons, the Oregon Trailers, the Santa Fe Traders, the Forty-niners, and perhaps others took live stock. But all these took cows, not cattle; domestic stock not range stock. There were survivals of the old Spanish ranching system in California and in New Mexico. But the process by which the Great Plains were stocked with cattle, by which ranches were set up wherever there was grass, much or little, was essentially as described. All the exceptions may be admitted, are admitted, but the essentials of the story remain the same.

The following, from the Nimmo Report, pp. 95-96, is an account that one commonly finds of how people learned the value of the Northern range. People inferred from the presence of buffalo that the northern range would be suitable for cattle; but the first practical demonstration of the fattening effects of Northern grasses came in the winter of 1864-1865, when E. S. Newman, who was conducting a train of supplies overland to Camp Douglas, was snowed up on the Laramie Plains. He made a winter camp and turned the oxen out to die. Spring found them not only alive, but in much better condition than when turned loose to starve and feed the wolves. This accidental discovery led to the purchase of cattle and the beginning of cattle-raising on the ranges of the Northwest.

Thus far we have followed the cattle from the plains of southwest Texas along the trail to Abilene, Kansas, and have noted that from 1866 to 1880 nearly five million head went north. In addition to the five million head sent to the Kansas market and the ranges north and west, many herds were turned directly west to the ranges of New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado; others went to Montana, Wyoming, and the Dakotas, and some into Canada. Despite this migration of cattle, the number remaining on the home range of Texas was greater than before. If we visualize the process by which the Great Plains ranges were stocked, we see an unending stream of cattle coming up from the south, many of them going east from Abilene or its successors, but as many more were going north and west, to supply the herds for the numerous ranches that were being opened up.

The spread of the range and ranch cattle industry over the Great Plains in the space of fifteen years—the movement was fairly complete in ten or twelve—is perhaps one of the outstanding phenomena in American history. The fur-hunters did not move faster, and since they destroyed that which supported them they had no claim to permanency; but the cattlemen spread the institution of ranching over the empire grass, the Great American Desert, within a period of fifteen years. During that period and for ten years after, men, cattle, and horses held almost undisputed possession of the region.

Our interest is not primarily in cattle, however; it is rather in the process by which man in relation to his environment evolved around cattle the institution of ranching. In this evolution the Plains worked their will, and man conformed. The Plains put men on horseback and taught them to work in that way. The southern Plains offered the natural conditions in which cattle could breed and multiply without care. Men struck out for markets—first by the forest roads, only to meet disaster and failure. The remorseless conditions pushed them out of the timber lands onto the open highway of the Plains, where cattle could travel and live in a suitable environment until they reached the railroad which carried them to the Eastern market. And the surplus cattle,

if we may personify them, saw the rolling grassy plains stretching from their trail to the western mountains and recognized them as their natural home. They went west to the recesses of the Rockies and north to the snows of Canada, carrying with them ranchman and cowboy with lariat, six-shooter, and horse. In the end the cattle kingdom occupied practically the whole Great Plains environment; it was the most natural economic and social order that the white man had yet developed in his experiment with the Great Plains.

But, with all this, we must not ignore the fact that, after all, the West (even including Texas) did not produce many cattle. In 1880 the whole United States had 39,675,533 head. Of this number the sixteen Western states and territories including both Dakotas, had only 12,612,089 head, or only about 34 per cent. If we exclude the Pacific states, then the true Plains area, including Texas, produced 11,000,846 head, or 27.7 per cent of the total. If we exclude Texas and the Pacific states, then the other Plains states rounded up but 6,106,223 head, or about 15.4 per cent of the total.

If the West produced comparatively so few cattle, then why is it that we think of the West, of the Plains, as the center of the cattle industry? Why do we call it the cattle kingdom? The answer is found in the method and not in the results. The thing that has identified the West in the popular mind with cattle is not the number raised, but the method of handling them. A thousand farms in the East will each have six or seven cows, with as many more calves and yearlings—ten thousand head. But they attract no attention. They are incidents of agriculture. In the West a ranch will cover the same area as the thousand farms, and will have perhaps ten thousand head, round-ups, rodeos, men on horseback, and all that goes with ranching. Hot days in the branding pen with bawling calves and the smell of burned hair and flesh on the wind! Men in boots and big hats, with the accompaniment of jingling spurs and frisky horses. Camp cook and horse wrangler! Profanity and huge appetites! The cattle industry in the East and that in the West were two worlds as different from each other as the East is different from the West. And the ninety-eighth meridian lies between.

The East did a large business on a small scale; the West did a small business magnificently.

3. THE EVOLUTION OF THE RANGE AND RANCH CATTLE INDUSTRY, 1866-1928

In the preceding pages an effort was made to show that the cattle industry, as carried on in the Plains country, rose in a natural manner and spread with amazing rapidity over the whole area to which it was adapted. Enough had been said to show that the industry was new, without counterpart or analogy among the institutions of the humid country of the East. In short, it was an industry remarkably adapted to the country that it appropriated. When approached in this manner, the ways of life in this region appear logical, reasonable, almost inevitable.

It should be stated, however, that no sooner had the cattle kingdom been set up as a natural institution adapted to its environment than the forces of the Industrial Revolution began to modify and destroy it. Up from the South came a natural institution, something new, something without antecedents, something willing to conform to all the laws of necessity; but from the East came the old institutions, seeking, through the forces of the Industrial Revolution, to utilize the land after the manner of men in the humid timber lands. In Chapters VII and VIII the influence of the Industrial Revolution on the Plains is dealt with at length, but it must be mentioned here in passing.

Though the civilization of the cattle kingdom was as complete within itself as was that of the Old South, it was not independent, but subject to the general conditions of the nation. It was affected by economic conditions in the East, such as the panics of 1873 and 1893, the boom of 1885, and the condition of the world market in general; it was affected by the railroad extension, the invention of barbed wire, and the adaptation of the windmill—things which altered the whole nature and economy of range practice; finally, it was affected by the immigration of the small farmer, granger or nester, into the West.

The area of the cattle kingdom has already been indicated. The unit of production in this area was the ranch, which term is used

to include the houses and all the range of the cattle, whether fenced or unfenced. The practice of raising cattle on a large scale is ranching, and the owner of a ranch is a ranchman or cattleman. The cowboy is an employee whose business it is to handle the cattle. In the beginning of ranching in the West the country was wide open and free, and grass was without limit throughout the whole region. The cattle were of Texas origin, low-grade and hardy.

In selecting a ranch site the ranchman's main considerations were grass and water. In the beginning there was no thought of securing water from wells or of impounding it in large dirt ponds, called "tanks" in the West. The ranchman who was seeking a location usually established his headquarters camp, which later became a ranch house, along some stream, occupying either bank or both banks. At first he had no neighbors, and his range covered about all the country that the cattle wanted to roam over; but after a time another ranchman would establish himself, either above or below the first, and appropriate a water front on the same stream. Across the divide was another stream, and there also ranches would be established. Thus it came about in a few years that the original ranchman had neighbors all around him, not in sight, but within fifteen or twenty or fifty miles—close enough, in the opinion of the ranchman. The result of this was that the range (the term applied to the whole open and unfenced country) was divided. As yet no ranchman owned any land or grass; he merely owned the cattle and the camps. He did possess what was recognized by his neighbors (but not by law) as range rights. This meant a right to the water which he had appropriated and to the surrounding range. Where water was scarce the control of it in any region gave control of all the land around it, for water was the *sine qua non* of the cattle country. For example, if the first ranchman occupied both sides of the stream, then his recognized range extended backward on both sides to all the land drained by the stream within the limits of his frontage; if he held but one side, then his range (for thus it was called) extended back only on that side. In the range country "divides" became of much importance, marking the boundary between the ranchmen of one stream-valley and those of another. Up and down the same stream the problem was

not quite so simple, but the ranchmen were careful to recognize that possession of water gave a man rights on the range. Moreover, it was not good form to try to crowd too much.

Under such conditions it was impossible to keep the cattle of one ranch from mingling with those of another. In fact, there was little effort at first to do so; the range was theoretically free to all, and the cattle, generally speaking, came and went at will, identified by their brands just as automobiles are today identified by number plates. In many cases, however, it was the practice of the cowboys to throw the neighboring cattle across the divide, or to "drift" them back toward their own ranges. This was a neighborly act, advantageous to everybody, and was not resented so long as there was plenty of room.

The cattle were rounded up twice a year, in the spring and in the fall. Since the range was what it was, the round-up had to be a community enterprise in which all ranchmen of the vast and undefined territory participated. In both round-ups all unbranded animals were put to the iron. If a drive was to be made, as in the early days of the range, the herd was started in the spring; but if the cattle were shipped, this might better be done in the fall, when they were fat from the summer grass. Under the open-range system it was almost impossible to improve the blood of the herds. The aggressive native bulls on the range, together with the naturally hard conditions of survival, made the process of improvement by breeding slow and uncertain; therefore the cattle remained of low grade, rangy, and able-bodied.

The range situation as outlined here may be said to have obtained in the Great Plains country from 1867 to 1876 or 1880, though, of course, practices varied from place to place. In some ways range life was idyllic. The land had no value, the grass was free, the water belonged to the first comer, and about all a man needed to "set him up" in the business was a "bunch" of cattle and enough common sense to handle them and enough courage to protect them without aid of the law. But farsighted men must have seen that things could not go on as they were. Single outfits claimed "range rights" over territory as large as Massachusetts and Delaware combined. It could not last.

In 1862 the Federal Homestead Law was passed; in 1874 the first piece of barbed wire was sold in the United States. These two facts combined to break the even tenor of the cattleman's way.

Until 1873 the establishment of cattle ranches in the West proceeded without interruption. Until 1870 the herds sent to Abilene and other railheads sold on a steady or rising market. Prices were particularly good in 1870, with the result that the drive from Texas in 1871 was the greatest in history—seven hundred thousand head going to Kansas alone. Besides the Texas cattle, the other Western states were beginning to contribute to the beef supply and reap the benefits of the high prices. But in 1871 the market conditions had changed, and the drovers found almost a complete reversal of the situation of the year before. There were few buyers, and they were reluctant rather than eager purchasers. Business conditions were slackening, the currency issue was agitating the country, and the railroads had put an end to a rate war which hitherto had benefited the cattlemen. Half the cattle brought from Texas remained unsold and had to be wintered at a loss on the prairies of Kansas. The drive from Texas in 1872, therefore, was only about half what it had been in 1871. The market had revived somewhat by then, but the demand was for a better grade of beef; consequently cattle from the Northern ranges did better than Southern, or Texas, cattle. In the same year a heavy corn crop was made in the corn belt, and there was considerable demand for cattle as feeders. This condition marked an important change in the Western cattle industry. Henceforth cattle were raised in Texas and transferred North to be fattened for market. Before 1872 the surplus cattle had gone to stock the Northern ranges; but these ranges were now fairly well supplied, so that the Texans had to look elsewhere for an outlet. "This," as a writer declared in 1904, "marked the beginning of the great business of transferring Texas cattle to Northern ranges and there rounding them out for market—a business that is still going on." In Texas the situation in 1873 was bad. The corn crop promised but a poor yield, the Northern ranges needed no more stock cattle, and the market demand was weak. The climax was reached on September 18, 1873, when the New York banking firm of Jay Cooke & Company closed its

doors, precipitating the first panic known to the range cattlemen.²² A single firm of shippers lost \$180,000 in three weeks. One stockman took his cattle to Chicago and did not get enough money for them to pay the shipping expenses. Out of this disaster the Southern cattlemen learned two things: that they could no longer hope to market scrub stock for the range in the North, and that they must either deliver good beef or good animals which could be fattened for beef. Another effect of the disaster of 1873 was that it led to an effort to organize the Live Stockmen's National Association. The organization was launched at Kansas City about the middle of September, with J. G. McCoy as secretary. The panic broke about three days later, and the organization disappeared in the general debacle.

After the panic of 1873 the range cattle industry began to struggle upward once more, though the drives from Texas were less frequent owing to the approaching saturation of the range and the fact that the railroads were extending into the West and diverting the cattle from the trails. Many herds were now sent from Texas to Arizona, to New Mexico, and some to the Indian Territory and to Colorado. Whereas the drive for 1873 had been 400,000, for 1874 it fell to 165,000 and for 1875 to 150,000, consisting largely of beeves and feeders.²³ Agricultural immigrants were gnawing with plows on the eastern margin of the Plains from Texas to Canada, and cattle were going further west, into the more arid country. In the meantime the Industrial Revolution was raising packing plants at St. Louis, Kansas City, and Chicago,—all on or near the margin of the Plains,—and people were learning to eat canned and cured meat, while refrigeration enabled fresh carcasses to be delivered anywhere in the United States or in Europe. The result was that cattle production fell off in the East, and people came more and more to depend on the Plains for meat.

²² The range is to be distinguished from the ranch. "Range" implies an open country; "ranch" implies a fenced range. The distinction is not always clear. Cattlemen refer to the grasslands as the range and to their occupation as ranching. When referring to unfenced land they speak of the open range. The operator is a ranchman, never a rangeman.

²³ For exact figures see table above.

By 1876 the cattle industry was recovering from the panic of three years before, and there was a steady demand for cattle, with a rising market—premonitory symptom of the cattle boom of the eighties. During the last four years of the seventies (1876-1880) the cattle business expanded on a steady rising market. In the last year two million head were marketed. A well-matured Northwestern ranger would bring about \$60 in the Northern markets, and a Texan steer about \$50. Grass was still free, the range was open, and the farmer was far away. Again, it could not last.

Then came the great boom of the early eighties. "It was a time of golden visions in a blaze of glory that led on to riotous feasting on the rim of the crater of ruin—a brief era of wild extravagance in theories and practices." There were many contributing factors to explain the boom; and, given the boom, the collapse was inevitable. Often an explanation of a historical event involves more than the sum of the factors that go to create the event. To get the proper perspective on what happened to the range cattle industry, we must make use of imagination. Here in the heart of America was a vast expanse of grassland from which the Indian and the buffalo had just been driven. On this land the use of grass and water was at first free to all. The grass would produce cattle with little expense and, in the popular estimation, with less work. So cattle prices rose steadily; there was a market for all that could be raised; and besides these incentives, there was something fascinating about a ranch, about riding over the green pastures on spirited horses and watching a fortune grow. It was generally conceded that the Western ranchman and cowboys were a rough set; but they took life, hard enough in itself, with a zest that made it look attractive to the outsider. To be a cowboy was adventure; to be a ranchman was to be a king. Furthermore, it would not do to wait. The land was being taken up; soon it would be too late to "get in" on this good thing. Besides, Horace Greeley had said "Go West." Men went West. Any attempt to explain a boom or a panic fails in that we cannot weigh the irrational factor, the contagion which spreads from one member of the group to another until the whole is caught up in a frenzy of buying or selling. Yet

we must seek explanations in the tangible things, realizing at the same time that the intangible factor is dominant.

Analyzing the situation about 1885 we find the following factors present in the boom.

1. Several railroads had by this time crossed the Plains or had gone far out on them.

2. These railroad companies were laying out and booming towns, doing all they could to get settlers into the region out of which they hoped to obtain a revenue both from the use of the road and from the sale of the bounty lands.

3. Money was plentiful in the country as a whole and was seeking an outlet for investment.

4. The eastern part of the United States was becoming more crowded, and farmers were pushing farther and farther into the cattle country. Barbed wire was well known by this time, and it enabled a homesteader to construct a cheap fence round his government land.

5. The Indians had all been reduced, and people were no longer held back from the Plains by fear of the scalping knife and the tomahawks.

6. Some of the ranges were being fenced, and this alarmed those who had hoped that the free range would last, causing them to grab for more land.

As a result the whole world (that is almost literally true) stampeded to the Great Plains to get a ranch while ranches were to be had. Easterners, Englishmen, Scotchmen, Canadians, and even Australians flocked to the Plains to become ranchers, to the amusement of the cowboys and to the disgust of the ranchmen, to both of whom cattle-raising was just an ordinary way of making a living on horseback rather than on the ground or in an office building.

With the scramble for ranches and the improvements of the national financial conditions, cattle began to rise in price. In 1878 and 1879 ordinary range stock sold at \$7 or \$8 a head by the herd, range delivery. By the end of 1880 the price was about \$9.50, and by the end of 1881 it was \$12.

This was the first step in the progress to that dizzy height of

speculation where men make money not out of cattle or oil, but out of a rising market and the folly of their fellow men. The wildest stories of fortunes that could be made went the rounds. The English newspapers reported that yearlings could be bought at \$4 or \$5 a head, could be fattened on free grass at the cost of another dollar, and could be sold at from \$60 to \$70 net. Men had again resorted to figuring on paper with the stub pencil. Marvelous stories were told of the increase of herds. It was demonstrated (on paper, of course) that if 100 cows and their female progeny were kept for ten years, the herd would number 1428, not counting an equal number of bulls which could be sold. One enthusiast figured that all the progeny would be heifers!²⁴

The winter of 1881-1882 was mild in the West, and at the end of it cattle were in unusually good condition. The high prices and the realization on the part of some of the wiser cattlemen that the days of free grass and open range were nearing a close resulted in an overstocking of the range. The resulting demand led to large purchases, to a diminution of the market supply, to an increased demand for beef, and hence a continual rise in price. Range cattle were selling for from \$30 to \$35 per head by 1882, and cattlemen could figure a profit of 300 per cent on what they had bought three years earlier. By the summer of 1882 the boom was at its height. Men were coming into the West from all parts to buy ranches, "range rights" (something that no one really owned), and herds of cattle by the tally-book count. English and Scotch cattle syndicates entered the list and had many representatives in the country to look after their interests. In the meantime cattle money rose from 1½ per cent a month to 2 per cent, and borrowers were not lacking at that rate. So great was the demand for cattle to stock the

²⁴ For an example of the public attitude toward the West in 1885 read Walter Baron von Richthofen's *Cattle-Raising on the Plains of North America*. It is on the whole moderate,—the sort of moderation that makes the thing discussed more desirable. In Chapter XIII, on "Instances of Profits Realized," he cites one case where an Irish servant girl accepted from her employer fifteen cows in lieu of money due her to the amount of \$150. It was agreed that the cattle and their increase should continue on the range under her brand. In ten years she "sold out to her master for \$25,000."

ranges that farm cattle were shipped from the closer agricultural states to the West.²⁵

At the same time shrewd and unscrupulous promoters seized their advantages and prepared to reap the harvest of speculation. They went to Europe and sold range rights in deserts which they had taken up under the Desert Land Act or other land acts. One promoter took a fortune from a syndicate in Holland by selling some questionable claims he had on the Pecos River in New Mex-

²⁵ An excellent analysis of the causes of the disruption of the cattle business about 1885, and a picture of the scope and operations of the industry, were given by Dudley H. Snyder, of Georgetown, Texas, before the Select Committee on Transportation and Sale of Meat Products. (See *Senate Report No. 829*, Fifty-first Congress, First Session, Serial No. 2705.) In part he said:

"We commenced driving in 1868. The first cattle—that is, Texas cattle—we bought at \$1.50 to \$2 a head for one-year-olds; two-year-olds, from \$2 to \$3; cows and three-year-olds about \$4, and I think we bought our beef cattle at \$7. We took nothing over four years old, and nothing under yearlings. In those days we had to have a limit, else we would get them heavier than we wanted to. For a number of years following the beginning of dressed beef we paid, in buying young steer cattle, a higher price for one- and two-year-old steers than for like ages of heifers, from the fact that they were worth more. In 1871, I think, the drive of stock cattle commenced heavier from Texas. It is my recollection that 600,000 or 650,000 cattle were driven from Texas that year, the larger part being stock cattle. Then our prices began to advance steadily up to about 1880 and 1881, when they got up pretty high, it being the policy of breeders there, and I think it must have prevailed all over the United States, to take better care of the cattle and hold on to them as cattle grew higher in price. Hence, for a few years, along from 1881 to 1885, heifers would cost more than steers of like ages. I mention this to carry out my ideas of the business. I think the policy prevailed throughout the country of taking care of the heifer cattle, which in a few years gave us an immense supply of cattle. During those years, too, while cattle were going up to such high and fabulous prices, as I thought then and think yet, a great deal of money was sent out from the East and from Europe to invest in cattle, and in numbers of cases cattle were bought at very high prices and at book account by men who did not know what they were doing, they representing large capitalists, syndicates. Therefore, I claim that in many instances where Texas cattle were bought at \$20, they paid \$40 on the book account. The same thing held in Wyoming Territory, where we had a range also, the price their being about \$30 for stock cattle. . . .

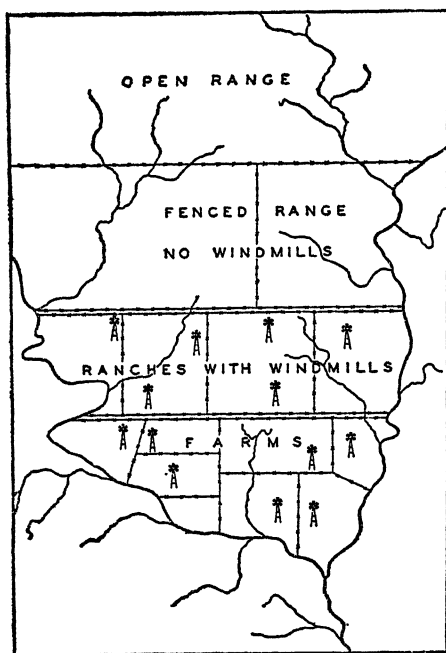
"As soon as the prices of cattle began to shrink and go back, those parties began to look to see where they stood. They found themselves in a bad fix, and it has caused the closing up of most of those companies and their withdrawal from the business, and a destruction of confidence in the business. That is the point I want to get at. I do not think I ever saw a business that was as properous as the cattle business up to 1884 and 1885 that went down as quick and fast, with no confidence left in it at all."

ico. He had the usual map of the promoter showing the most wonderful landscape, with grazing herds, to say nothing of five steamboats plying the waters of the Pecos!

But by 1885 the time of reckoning had come. Overstocking the range had so reduced the grass that either a drought or a hard winter would bring disaster. One ranch near Fort Worth, Texas, had 25,000 head of cattle on a range of 100,000 acres. In the spring of 1883 the round-up brought in 10,000 head; 15,000 dead cattle on the range told the rest of the story. The drought was more severe in Texas than elsewhere, but it was fairly general throughout the range country. Prices began to weaken in 1884, and the crash came in the next year. Cattle that had been valued at from \$30 to \$35 on the range sold for \$8 or \$10, if they sold at all. The "range rights" were found to be fictitious, and the free grass, if not gone, was going under fence now very rapidly. The holiday and fair-weather ranchmen and remittance men suffered along with the real cattlemen. There was the usual stampede to "get from under," with the result that cattle were thrown on the market at any price.

It was the beginning of this calamity that the second effort was made to organize a national live-stock association. The National Cattle and Horse Growers' Association was organized in St. Louis in 1884. Twenty-seven states and territories were represented by fourteen hundred delegates. This association perished in the calamity of 1886, as had the first in that of 1873.

The period following the collapse of the boom, from 1885 to the end of the decade, seemed dark indeed to the range cattleman; it seemed that the whole world—his own world—was tumbling down on his head. Prices continued to decline until 1887, when the best grass-fed Texas steers brought \$2.40 per hundred pounds on the Chicago market. A twelve-hundred-pound steer would bring \$28.80, and after the expenses of marketing were deducted the owner would realize between \$5 and \$9 per head, depending on the place from which cattle were shipped. Conditions became so bad that they attracted the attention of the national government, and in May, 1888, a Senate committee consisting of Vest of Missouri, Coke of Texas, Plumb of Kansas, Manderson of Nebraska, and Cullom of Illinois (later succeeded by Farwell of the same state) was appointed,



their commission being "to examine fully all questions touching the meat product of the United States . . . and to make report to the Senate at its next session by bill or otherwise."²⁶

Nevertheless the wire fences continued to creep westward. Long-headed cattlemen, realizing the precariousness of their situation, began to acquire all the land they could, to lease all they could, and to fence all they dared and were able. Their fences often included their own land, leased land, government land which they could not lease, and in some cases the land of

homesteading farmers. Men who could not fence opposed the practice of fencing, clinging to the sinking ship of free grass. Cattlemen divided into two hostile camps: free-grass men versus big-pasture or fenced-range men. The free-grass men learned the use of wire-cutters and began to cut the fences; they were not without justification, for their stock were sometimes terribly mutilated by the barbed wire. Then came the farmer, hated by both free-grass men and wire men. But the farmer also fenced, inclosing the water, and he too soon found himself involved in a war which he was ill prepared to wage. The following quotation from an old trail captain will give some idea of the way a trail driver felt about the fencing.

In those days [1874] there was no fencing along the trails to the North, and we had lots of range to graze on. Now there is so much

²⁶ The full report of the committee may be found in *Senate Report No. 829, Fifty-first Congress, First Session, Serial No. 27,052.*

land taken up and fenced in that the trail for most of the way is little better than a crooked lane, and we have hard lines to find enough range to feed on. These fellows from Ohio, Indiana, and other northern and western states—the “bone and sinew of the country,” as politicians call them—have made farms, enclosed pastures, and fenced in water holes until you can’t rest; and I say, D—n such bone and sinew! They are the ruin of the country, and have everlastingly, eternally, now and forever, destroyed the best grazing-land in the world.²⁷

After the storm had passed, the thoughtful cattleman looked over the wreckage to see what he could salvage for the future. Certain facts stood out clearly before him, provided he saw clearly:

1. The future ranchman would have to operate under a system of fenced pastures which he had either purchased or leased. There was little left of what was known as open range, and much of what remained was heavily overstocked. The range was becoming what Frank S. Hastings called the big-pasture country.

2. The scrub stock and longhorn must be replaced with a better grade of beef cattle. The old idea that high-grade cattle could not survive on the ranges of the West was giving way. Furthermore, with fences the ranchman could control his stock and keep the scrub cattle out.

3. The haphazard, free-and-easy methods of ranching must go with the native cattle and the free range that had produced them. It was all right to let a longhorn steer or bull die if he were not strong enough to survive the blizzard and the drought or fight off the wolves; but a blooded Hereford bull that cost from \$100 to \$500 was a different matter. He must be protected, sheltered, and fed if necessary, in order that the investment might be saved and the herd improved. The range also had to be protected and parts of it saved for winter feed. This meant cross fences, and here, again, arose the question of water supply. The water problem was solved by the well-drill and the wind-mill, and by the end of the century the government had found out that cattle should not walk more than two and a half miles to water, and had told the ranchman about it in a bulletin

²⁷ *Prose and Poetry of the Live Stock Industry*, p. 686.

which he never read. He had found it out for himself by that time. Water was provided for the big ranches by wells, windmills, and artificial tanks. The cowboy's duties changed; he now had to mend fences and grease windmills and devote less time to cattle.

4. The railroads had penetrated all parts of the country, and the long drives to market, which blooded cattle could not have endured, gradually passed away. The railroads also brought forage and feed to the cattle.²⁸

To sum it all up, the collapse of 1885 converted ranching from an adventure into a business which is today carried on with as much system as farming or manufacturing. The longhorns have become so rare that a movement has been started to gather a few of them on a ranch and preserve them as a relic along with the buffalo. Still there clings about ranching more of romance than is found appertaining to any other occupation in America. The explanation of this phenomenon will be attempted in another place; it is sufficient here to say that it is due largely to the nature of the Plains and to the novelty of the methods employed there.

In the beginning of this section it was shown how the original type of ranch was set up in the Great Plains. We may now trace the evolution of this original ranch in an effort to illustrate concretely what has already been given theoretically. Let us consider the ranch established on the stream, with the range extending back to the divides and far up and down the stream, an ideal situation little disturbed by neighboring ranchmen. The land could not be fenced, and the land far back from the stream could not be utilized.

In 1874 barbed wire was invented, and rumor came to the ranchman that some cattlemen were fencing land and that some were even foolish enough to buy land. Perfectly absurd, he thought.

²⁸ "You will see," wrote D. W. Hinkle of San Antonio, Texas, "that as Texas is being fenced by large pasture owners, . . . in a few years railroads must furnish the necessary transportation to carry the cattle to market" ("The Range and Ranch Cattle Traffic," House Executive Document No. 267, p. 111, Forty-eighth Congress, Second Session, Serial No. 2304). The report was made for the Treasury Department in February, 1885, by Joseph Nimmo, Junior Chief of the Bureau of Statistics, and is often called the Nimmo Report. It furnishes an excellent account of conditions in 1884-1885.

Then he thought again and decided that, to make sure of water rights, he had better homestead the quarter section on which the ranch stood. This was not an expensive procedure and soon was out of the way. Then one day it was reported that a new outfit was coming into that part of the range and would try to "horn in" along the river. Better get a little more land. So he bought up and down the stream until his money was gone.²⁹ Then a shrewd trick occurred to him; he had his cowboys homestead a quarter section each, with the understanding that he would reimburse them as soon as cattle went up or when he sold. He paid the cowboys what they were out, and in this way he acquired the water front up and down stream as far as he desired or could. In this manner he became the owner of quarter sections along the stream, and thereby gained control of the land on both sides back to the divide.

But cattle kept crowding into his range. A barbed-wire agent came through and told him that Silas Jones was planning to put fence around one hundred and fifty thousand acres of land, and that he was inclosing government land as well as what he owned. The ranchman was skeptical about barbed wire, but heard of another fence going up not fifty miles from him. When he went to Chicago in the fall to market his cattle, he heard of barbed wire everywhere. His cattle brought a good price, and he purchased a carload of wire and shipped it West. Others soon did the same. Then the wire went up around fifty sections of land. He could then keep his own cattle separated from those of his neighbors. But he owned only a small part of the land. He practically had two pastures separated by the river. No cross fences could be put in, because there was no water in the upcountry. In the meantime he continued to acquire the land that he had fenced, by purchase or by having his cowboys homestead it, or by buying out or running off the nester or sheepman who happened to get in before he fenced.

Then came a hard winter followed by a dry summer. The range

²⁹ In *Cattle-Raising in the Plains of North America*, p. 69, Baron von Richt-hofen says of George A. Binkelman of Denver, "From time to time he bought one piece of water front after the other, and owns now about twenty miles of water front, controlling all the range contiguous to it." For recent accounts of the cattle industry see E. E. Dale, *The Range Cattle Industry*; E. S. Osgood, *The Day of the Cattleman*; and J. Evetts Haley, *The XIT Ranch of Texas*.

had been overstocked, and the cattle had tramped down or eaten out all the grass near the river. Only in the back of the pastures (the ranchman still called it the range) was the grass good. But that grass was five or ten or fifteen miles away. The cattle could hardly go as far as that. The poor ones who needed grass most got the least, and the better cattle walked off their flesh traveling between water and grass. Temporarily the ranchman leased grass, if he could find it; if not, he sent out the skinners, who, with buzzards for guides, brought in the inferior hides.

Then opportunely another Chicago agent appeared. He was selling windmills, and pointed out to the suffering ranchman that if he would sink wells and erect windmills in the outer edges of his pasture he could bring the water and grass together and save his cattle.

More expense! But the wells were put down, one to the north and another to the south, and the cattle gathered round them, pathetically gentled by hunger and thirst. Then the ranchman sank other wells in other parts of the range, and this enabled him to put in cross fences, to make a "trap"⁸⁰ for his horses. He now had a system of pastures—summer pastures, winter pastures, bull pastures, pastures for blooded stock, and others for range cattle. Along the fertile river valley, fields were opened up on which hay and other forage crops were grown to supplement the range.

In the meantime the railroad was coming his way; it would, in fact, extend through his ranch, and he would have stock pens, from which his cattle could be loaded on the cars. Settlers were coming, taking up the land all around him, turning under the precious grass, and turning over soil of which the right side was up in the first place. His business acumen asserted itself. Why not establish a town site on the ranch and sell off a part of his pasture? The site was selected with reference to the railroad. Pine houses went up, and the measured thud, thud of the well-drill sounded all the day. Soon windmills were whirling gayly in the stiff Plains breeze, and puny gardens appeared in the sod of dead grass roots.

The town was named for the ranchman. A bank was opened, of

⁸⁰ A ranch trap was a small pasture of some 320 or 640 acres in which to keep the saddle horses.

which he became president and chief stockholder. His children were grown; the older girls were married to cowboys or to neighboring young ranchmen, and the younger children were going away to college or cutting a wide swath in the social life of the new town. A few wet years, and the farmers all made bountiful crops of wheat, forage, and even of corn. They wrote "back East" to tell their brothers and sisters and friends about it. Finest land in the world! Plenty of rain; no "grubs" to dig out of the soil. Land to be had for one fifth of what they ask for that worn-out land in the East. Good health, no chills, no fever, no doctor's bills. And, besides, the country is "getting more seasonable." Always that fiction, the expression of a vain hope, asserted itself in the fat years of the West. The covered wagons swarmed over the land, "bone and sinew." Land prices rose, and the ranchman cut up another pasture which he turned over to the farmers, mostly on credit. Then came the drought, and the covered wagons stole away, taking their occupants back East to the cotton patches and cornfields or shops of their former neighbors, there to become tenants or wage-workers, their spirits crushed, fortunes gone.

Then there was talk of irrigation, and some water was applied to the soil by artificial means, either from windmills (often homemade) or from the river. Irrigation enabled a few to remain. The ranch had by this time drawn back from the more arable lands, the cattle were being fed through the winter season, and the high-grade ones were perhaps housed during the blizzards and stormy weather.

The original ranchman had practically retired from business, maintaining a desk at the bank, riding his horse and hitching him at the accustomed place, despite the accumulating automobiles, and acting as a sort of general adviser and oracle of the community. A few cattle were driven in and shipped, and there was talk of branding and round-ups, though the oldsters understood that the meaning of the terms had changed. The life of one man spanned the rise and complete transformation of the ranch; it spanned the rise and fall of the cattle kingdom.

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C. VANN WOODWARD

THE FOCUS of historians tends to follow the most dramatic action on the historical stage. Among historians more concerned with sociological trends than climactic events, there is an equivalent inclination to minimize the inchoate in favor of the strongly developed. It is no accident, therefore, that the culture of the pre-Civil War South has been examined minutely but that the years after Reconstruction have been relatively neglected. The attractiveness of the ante-bellum South requires little explanation. Although it scarcely had the unity suggested by the careless generalization "slave culture," it has seemed to many to be an integrated and somewhat exotic whole. Southern writers have had the added inducement of feeling, consciously or unconsciously, that it was an act of sectional faith to provide satisfactory accounts of the "Old South" in full flower.

Having laid the Confederacy to rest and withdrawn the last of the federal troops from the occupied South, historians have customarily shifted their interest to the industrial progress of the victorious North. When Southern developments have re-entered the general historical narrative, they have usually appeared as subdivisions of the "agrarian protest" or "the rise of regional literature."

C. Vann Woodward's *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*, is a brilliant and long-needed study in a neglected field. Out of scattered monographs, original research, and a penetrating understanding, Woodward has fashioned a broad synthesis which attempts to integrate all the important phases of Southern

society into a coherent whole. It is a difficult task, made more demanding by Woodward's steady refusal to accept many of the traditional concepts his predecessors used to organize the material. Indeed, the primary purpose of the book may be considered as an effort to redefine the term "the New South," which others have used so glibly.

If one set of circumstances may be said to dominate the others within this culture, Woodward seems reasonably certain that it is the economic. Just as the country as a whole was dominated in the last quarter of the nineteenth century by the rise of industry, so the key to Southern development—political and ideological as well as economic—must be sought in the ways in which the region was affected by the shift away from an agriculturally oriented economy. The same representatives of big business moved into positions of political power, believing in the doctrines of social Darwinism which held sway in Northern thought. But what gives especial distinction to Woodward's work is his searching analysis of the impact of these general trends on a section less prepared than the North to receive them.

It is not a pretty story, and the author certainly cannot be accused of making it less grim than it was. The ruthless selfishness of business interests, the continued frustration of the spirit of the Thirteenth Amendment, the demoralizing agrarian poverty, and the brutality of factory life—all these are set down with what seems an almost excessive severity. In any case, if the "New South" of industry and grimy cities did not arrive overnight, it was not for want of Northern examples and of Southern leaders eager to duplicate them. The failure to achieve a full-fledged industrial society may be attributed partly to the same circumstances which had kept the region in a colonial status throughout its history. The North proved no less exacting a creditor than Great Britain had been in the eighteenth century; and absentee ownership increased in direct ratio with industrial expansion.

The least satisfactory part of the book deals with the persistence of "Old South" within the new. Woodward appears to regard the former primarily as a legend useful to appease Southern vanity and to titillate the advocates of the new industrial order. But there was a substance as well as a myth. The continuing force of agrarian economic institutions and ideologies must be explained rather than dismissed. Resentment of a commercial culture took more important, even if less attractive, forms than the novels of Thomas Nelson Page. Woodward is, of course, well aware of this, although his description of the triumph of Whiggery sometimes makes less than an adequate allowance for it. The reconciliation of new industrial hopes with sectional realities is still far from complete.

Not the least noteworthy feature of this book of many distinctions is the fact that its author is a Southerner. Sectional historians are noted more for their loyalties than for their objectivity. In dealing fearlessly and honestly with the South, Woodward has not only written what is destined to become a classic in its own right; he may very well have set the standard by which future regional historians will judge their success in disengaging facts from feelings.

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The Divided Mind of the New South

CANVASSING the Southern problem in 1880, Edwin L. Godkin felt that he had hit upon the essence of the matter. "The conversion of the Southern whites to the ways and ideas of what is called the industrial stage in social progress, which is really what has to be done to make the South peaceful, is not a more formidable task than that which the anti-slavery men had before them fifty years ago," he wrote. He believed that the conversion could be effected "by the kind of speaking which persuades men and not that which exasperates them." Admittedly there were obstacles. "The South," he said, "in the structure of its society, in its manners and social traditions, differs nearly as much from the North as Ireland does, or Hungary, or Turkey." The common religion, language, and law were important, "but they are only a basis."¹

Godkin was not the first to entertain such ideas. They seemed especially common, in fact, among critics of foreign or New England extraction. Alexis de Tocqueville had thought that the perverse South would be "assimilated" by "the civilization of the North."² Ralph Waldo Emerson, the New England sage, shared his views. Speaking at Washington in 1862 to an audience that included President Lincoln and members of his cabinet, Emerson asked, rhetorically: "Why cannot the best civilization be extended over the whole country, since the disorder of the less-civilized portion menaces the existence of the country?"³ Once Lincoln's policy of moderation was overthrown, the idea of revolutionizing Southern society in the image of the North became the avowed policy of

From *Origins of the New South* by C. Vann Woodward, by permission of the Louisiana State University Press.

¹ *Nation*, XXXI (1880), 126.

² Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. by Henry Reeve (New York, 1904), II, 444.

³ Ralph Waldo Emerson, quoted in Charles and Mary Beard, *The American Spirit* (New York, 1942), 310.

the party in power. In the words of Thaddeus Stevens, "It is intended to revolutionize their principles and feelings . . . [to] work a radical reorganization in Southern institutions, habits, and manners." For Governor Horatio Seymour that revolution would not be complete "until their ideas of business, industry, money making, spindles and looms were in accord with those of Massachusetts."⁴

Inhabitants of "the less-civilized portion," from the days of Thomas Jefferson down to the period under consideration, had shown little hospitality toward these conceptions and some truculence in rejecting them. As late as 1880, only a week after Godkin's analysis of the situation appeared, Whitelaw Reid despaired of converting the refractory Southerners. "To us," he wrote, "the principles to which they cling are heresies not to be entertained after such bloody refutation as they have had. . . . [Yet] no facts, no statistics, no arguments, can make them comprehend that the Northern masses are their superiors, intellectually, physically, numerically, and financially."⁵ Had Reid and Godkin scanned the Southern scene more carefully, however, they would have discovered much to inspire hope.

In comparing the difficulties of converting the South to "the industrial stage of social progress" with those encountered by the abolitionists, Godkin might have taken heart in reflecting that whereas the abolitionists had been met with resolute hostility, their tracts having been banned from the mails and their sympathizers summarily ejected, the new revolutionists were able to penetrate the South's borders with ease. Their tracts filled Southern journals, and their Southern converts stormed and took whole cities.

Among the spokesmen of Northern industry who caught the ear of the South was the Boston capitalist Edward Atkinson. Although one of the aims of Atkinson's mission, as spokesman of New England's cotton manufacturers, was to divert the South into primary industries and the preparation of raw materials, he was listened to eagerly and read widely. His biographer describes him as "a former Abolitionist who had his first Southern contact in helping

⁴ Quoted in Howard K. Beale, *The Critical Year* (New York, 1930), 149, 276.

⁵ *New York Tribune*, August 30, 1880.

to equip John Brown's raiders with Sharp's rifles."⁶ But whereas Atkinson's armed emissary had been dealt with harshly, Atkinson himself was given an honorary degree by a leading Southern university, and was much sought after as a speaker. Speaking in Atlanta in 1880 he said: "When we, who are business men take a firm hold upon political questions, and try men and measures by their effect on industry and commerce, a great advance in the true science of politics will have been made." North and South would then be "one in faith, and one in hope." He was "warmly congratulated" upon his speech by Governor Colquitt, former Governor Bullock, Kimball, and the two Inman brothers—now presumably all "one in faith."⁷

William D. Kelley, often called "Pig Iron" because of his advocacy of protection, performed the mission from the Pennsylvania ironmasters to the Southern mineral region that Atkinson performed for the New England manufacturers in the textile South. Back in 1867 the Radical Republican Kelley had appeared at Mobile to preach his doctrines to a mixed group of whites and blacks and precipitated a riot that threatened his life. Less than twenty years later, however, in an extended speaking tour in the same region Kelley professed himself touched by "The eager desire of these energetic, hopeful, and courteous people" to hear a man they once "regarded as the chief apostle of a system of oppressive sectional taxation, which had reduced the Southern people to the condition of hewers of wood and drawers of water."⁸

The South gave willing ear to other Northern evangelists, but far more influential than the Northerners were their Southern apostles. Some of them, not old enough to recall the Old Order, combined the zeal of the new convert with the impetuosity of youth. Richard H. Edmonds was only twenty-five when he founded the *Manufacturers' Record* of Baltimore in 1882, and William Wadley Yonge was twenty-three when he helped launch the *Tradesman* of Chattanooga. Born in Augusta, Georgia, in 1856, Yonge, with the support of Adolph S. Ochs, started the *Tradesman* in 1879. Yonge

⁶ Harold F. Williamson, *Edward Atkinson; The Biography of an American Liberal, 1827-1905* (Boston, 1934), 176.

⁷ Quoted in Hannibal I. Kimball, *International Cotton Exposition, 1881 . . .* (New York, 1882), 12-14, 26.

⁸ Kelley, *Old South and the New*, 138-39.

died at the age of twenty-nine, but his journal continued to expand in influence. The young Virginian Edmonds gained greater influence, not only through the Baltimore journal, but through pamphlets, books, and speeches. Spread on the pages of the *Manufacturers' Record* were weekly reports on the triumphs of the Southern capitalism: investments, new establishments, letters, and speeches of Northern capitalists. The journal described itself as "a thoroughly Southern paper," "thoroughly identified with the New South."⁹ Edmonds employed statistics for hortatory purposes, with something of the orator's license. A businessman himself, and eventually director in several large corporations, Edmonds scorned politics and politicians and, as he said, "labored persistently to impress upon the people of the South the importance of giving every possible encouragement to Northern and foreign capitalists to invest their money in the South." He inveighed against "demagogues and blatherskites," who provoked "the agrarian spirit against railroads," and he pressed the protests of Northeast capitalists against "local taxation and other shortsighted but sugar-coated communism in many Southern states."¹⁰ Inspired by the *Record*, many similar journals were founded in the South. One of them, the *Texas Trade Review*, declared that "Mr. Edmonds has set an example that may well and profitably be followed by others."¹¹

In a day when newspapers were regarded as the voice of their editors, the editors of city dailies—Francis W. Dawson of the *Charleston News and Courier*, Henry Watterson of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, Henry W. Grady of the *Atlanta Constitution*—were public figures of supreme importance. Their organs were regarded in the eighties as "metropolitan and unprejudiced," as distinct from small papers that reflected "local surroundings and interests" and were therefore "prejudiced"¹²—a distinction, incidentally, which sounds, more surely than volumes of statistics, the depths of change in the New South. The country editors themselves, eager to keep up with the city oracles, "echoed them with tiny peals in the local weeklies."¹³

⁹ *Manufacturers' Record*, VI (August 16, 1884), 7; IX (February 13, 1886), 7.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, VII (May 2, 1885), 359; VIII (December 5, 1885), 544.

¹¹ Quoted *ibid.*, XXXIV (December 16, 1898), 349.

¹² *New Orleans Times Democrat*, quoted *ibid.*, VII (June 13, 1885), 556.

¹³ Thomas D. Clark, *The Southern Country Editor* (Indianapolis, 1948), 28-29.

Dawson, the romantic Anglo-Southerner who had enlisted in the Confederate navy at Southampton in the opening year of the Civil War, began his persistent campaign for Southern capitalism and industry in the early seventies from the columns of the *News and Courier*. In Dawson's metropolitan and unprejudiced eyes there was nothing in old Charleston that could not be improved with an eye to Pittsburgh. "As for Charleston," he wrote, "the importation of about five hundred Yankees of the right stripe would put a new face on affairs, and make the whole place throb with life and vivid force." He preferred "a cross between the Bostonian and the Chicagoan."¹⁴ Although Dawson and his compatriot Godkin, who preceded him to the New World by five years, chose opposing sides in the Civil War of their adopted land, they saw eye to eye on the deeper consequences of that unpleasantness. If Atkinson and Kelley were the emissaries of Boston and Philadelphia, Dawson and Godkin spoke with the voice of Manchester to the New South.

There was a magic in Henry Grady's name that still has potency. "What a radiant and charming and accomplished man he was!" exclaimed Josephus Daniels half a century after Grady's death.¹⁵ To his own times Grady was "a genius born for an era—a marvel of inspiration to every faltering industry."¹⁶ He came by his businessman's philosophy honestly, for he sprang not from planter stock but from ante-bellum tradesmen, promoters, and gold prospectors, and he married into a pioneer cotton-manufacturing family. Grady's business associates and friends included John H. Inman, Major Burke, and Victor Newcomb, young president of the Louisville and Nashville. Hard luck stalked his newspapers, three of which failed within five months. His luck turned in 1880, however, when Cyrus W. Field loaned him \$20,000 to buy a quarter interest in the *Atlanta Constitution*, and Newcomb guided him in stock speculation to pay off the loan. By 1887 the weekly edition of his paper was claiming the largest subscription list in the South, and the following year it was acknowledged to have the largest circulation of any paper of its kind in the United States. But Grady

¹⁴ Charleston *News and Courier*, August 11, 1882.

¹⁵ Daniels, *Tar Heel Editor*, 382.

¹⁶ Walter G. Cooper, *The Piedmont Region* . . . (Atlanta, 1895), 97.

became more famous and influential than his paper. As a practical political with the wires of a powerful machine in his hands, he helped see to it that Georgia was governed by the new industrialists. As an orator of national fame he advertised opportunities for investment in his region, celebrated the self-made man, and preached "reconciliation" with the Northeast. Both Grady and Dawson died in 1889, still young men, yet men who had lived to see their message accepted as the creed of their people.¹⁷

Rarely were the new captains of industry sufficiently articulate to speak their message directly to their people. Yet not only was Daniel Augustus Tompkins a great industrialist, but he was also supremely articulate, and fired with a zeal to proselytize his unregenerate countrymen. Brought up in the county of Edgefield, South Carolina, Tompkins was educated at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York, served his apprenticeship as engineer at the Bethlehem Iron Works, and in 1882 moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, to open his own business. This included, according to his biographer, the work of "industrial missionary and apostle of the New South." His business prospered wonderfully. He became "chief owner and president of three large cotton mills, director of eight mills, and stockholder in many more," besides a manufacturer and distributor of cotton-mill machinery and machinery for other kinds of mills all over the South. Edmonds quickly discovered in young Tompkins a kindred spirit and invited him to write for the *Manufacturers' Record*. As owner of three newspapers and writer of innumerable pamphlets and articles, Tompkins became a publicist in his own right. In his papers he "made use of all possible material that could be used either to point the moral or adorn the tale of industrialism. . . . Anything, everything, and everybody—all the world—was grist in the voracious Tompkins mill of industrialism. He ground it out and gave it to Piedmont Carolina for its meal." Capable of some subtlety, the propagandist realized that "these changes had to be carefully expressed and worked out to keep from offending the delicate sensibilities of a fine race of people." Like some modern Augustine, Tompkins elaborated a whole theory of the history of his people to justify his faith. "In the early days of the republic," ran the theory, "the

¹⁷ Nixon, *Henry W. Grady*, 26-32, 45, 122, 167-69, 183, 238, 257-58, 262.

South was the manufacturing end of the union." Then arose false prophets—"Mr. Jefferson," with his "mistaken theory," for example, not to mention Tompkins' distant relative Calhoun—and there followed years of wandering in the wilderness. The new gospel, then, was not recantation but asseveration. Like Carnegie a reader of Herbert Spencer, Tompkins believed that "the survival of the fittest is, has been, and will always be the law of progress." In his papers he fought child-labor legislation and sought to save "Democracy from Communistic Populism," and capitalist enterprise from governmental regulation of any sort.¹⁸

It is perhaps worth observing of Tompkins, as well as of all the apostles of his persuasion so far mentioned, that it is a mistake to view them merely as advocates of "industrialism"—of which there were several ante-bellum examples in the South. What is more important, they were preaching laissez-faire capitalism, freed of all traditional restraints, together with a new philosophy and way of life and a new scale of values.

Influences of other kinds brought to bear on the dominant minority in the South were changing the region's character more subtly and powerfully than it could be altered by frank propaganda. Recalling that in the old days "the Lowndeses, Randolphs, Rutherfords and so on married right and left into the Knickerbocker blood," a Richmond newspaper in the nineties was not surprised to observe that more recently "intermarriage has given New York's best society a distinctly southern blend."¹⁹ Both Cornelius Vanderbilt and Collis P. Huntington, in their second marriages, chose young brides from Alabama. Henry M. Flagler at seventy-one married a young North Carolina belle and built her a \$2,500,000 palace at Palm Beach. For these aging buccaneers the South was a belated romance upon which they lavished endowments, investments, and the devotion of dotage.

Charles Dudley Warner remarked in 1889 that "society becomes yearly more and more alike North and South. It is becoming more and more difficult to tell in any summer assembly—at Newport, the White Sulphur, Saratoga, Bar Harbor—by physiognomy, dress

¹⁸ Winston, *Builder of the New South* . . . *Daniel Augustus Tompkins*, 12-16, 75-78, 126, 234, 242-44, 253, 299.

¹⁹ Richmond *Dispatch*, June 9, 1895.

or manner, a person's birthplace."²⁰ Irene Langhorne of Virginia established her claim to the title of the all-American "Gibson girl" by marrying Charles Dana Gibson in 1895. About Miss Langhorne there was said to be "no trace of languor." She was "in tune with the times," "capable and energetic." Even Southern belles could be brisk and businesslike. And over the gilded court of New York's exclusive Four Hundred, as arbiter of a thousand fine points ("One is taken, the other left"), presided the renegade Georgian, Ward McAllister. On his arm Irene Langhorne led the grand march at the New York Patriarch's Ball in 1893.

*He does not reign in Russia cold,
Nor yet in far Cathay,
But o'er this town he's come to hold
All undisputed sway.*²¹

New Southerners invaded not only Fifth Avenue but Wall Street, where there were "several Aladdins who came from the South." Some ancient names appeared in these alien courts: a Beverley Tucker, "for many years a successful counsel before congressional committees for large railroad corporations,"²² or a John C. Calhoun, railroad speculator. But most of the names were new: John H. Inman, from broker's clerk to Fifth Avenue mansion. "What an exemplar is here for our young men," exclaimed Henry Grady over Inman's rise. "What a brilliant promise to draw them away from the arid ways of politics . . . at thirty-six worth a million and a half."²³ Some were found useful as presidents of Southern firms controlled from Wall Street: Samuel Spencer, from section boss to president of Morgan's Southern Railway. "Being found exceedingly faithful over a very few things," it was said of him, "he was soon given authority over many."²⁴

One evidence of the South's acceptance of Northern ideas as the "national" standard was its pathetic eagerness for Northern ap-

²⁰ Warner, *Studies in the South and West*, 35-36.

²¹ Ward McAllister, *Society as I Have Found It* (New York, 1890, 162, 232; Fairfax Downey, *Portrait of an Era as Drawn by C. D. Gibson* (New York, 1936), 215, 222.

²² *Richmond Dispatch*, July 5, 1890.

²³ Quoted in Russell F. Terrell, *A Study of the Early Journalistic Writings of Henry W. Grady* (Nashville, 1927), 163.

²⁴ *Richmond Dispatch*, June 9, 1895.

proval: A little Mississippi weekly paper, quoting the Detroit *Free Press*, congratulating Mississippians on their "push"; a Baltimore journal basking in the approval of Henry Ward Beecher; the Galveston *News* snatching at a compliment from Jay Gould; Atlantans rejoicing in a donation to their Cotton Exposition from General William T. Sherman. "We wanted commendation at that time from our conquerors," remembered a New Orleans woman, "and we needed it."²⁵

Northern families were sometimes important elements in the new dominant society. Especially in the mineral region were they prone to make of some towns not only economic, but political outposts of empire. Writing to Secretary William E. Chandler, who had inquired about prospects for the Republican party in Alabama, a Northern immigrant replied: "Large manufacturing interests have sprung up at Birmingham just outside; and all in this District: Alabama Furnace; Anderson Furnace, controlled by Genl. Tyler of Pennsylvania, Tecumsha [*sic*] Furnace controlled by Ohio people, Shelby *Iron* Furnace, the largest in the state—some millions of Capital, controlled by *Hartford Connecticut people*—The Stonewall Furnace, the Aetna Furnace, Cedar Creek Furnace, & other large manufacturing interests—all controlled by Northern men who will cooperate if the proper influences are brought to bear."²⁶

Within the little islands of industrialism scattered through the region, including the old towns as well as the new, was rising a new middle-class society. It drew some recruits from the old planter class, but in spirit as well as in outer aspect it was essentially new, strikingly resembling the same class in Midwestern and Northeastern cities.²⁷ Richmond, former capital of the Confederacy, observed the social revolution within its walls with complacency: "We find a new race of rich people have been gradually springing up among us, who owe their wealth to successful trade and espe-

²⁵ King, *Memories of a Southern Woman of Letters*, 53.

²⁶ W. E. Horne, Talladega, Ala., to Chandler, September 15, 1882, in Chandler Papers. A similar instance was that of a Pennsylvanian who wrote Chandler: "While not wishing to be egotistical I think I can control the Electoral vote of Florida in the coming national contest." He explained: "I am the man who originated the Diston scheme which has put several millions of dollars in that state and put them on their feet." A. B. Linderman to Chandler, December 19, 1883, *ibid.*

²⁷ *Figaro* (New Orleans), I, (1883-1884), 8.

cially to manufacturers. . . . [They] are taking the leading place not only in our political and financial affairs, but are pressing to the front for social recognition. . . . 'The almighty dollar' is fast becoming a power here, and he who commands the most money holds the strongest hand. We no longer condemn the filthy lucre. . . . They may be parvenuish, and want something of the polish which is the heritage of birth or only acquired by many generations of refining influences; but these are trifling matters. . . . Our provincial characteristics are fast disappearing, and we are not only advancing towards metropolitan development, but are losing our petty, narrow prejudices and becoming truly cosmopolitan. . . . We are no longer a village but a city."²⁸

The *Industrial South* asked in the title of an editorial, "Shall We Dethrone Our Idols?" and answered with a thumping affirmative. It seems that "the founders of our American system . . . forgot to consider that the American public was to be peculiarly a community of business men, and that what it would most need was the practical wisdom of business men in the administration of its affairs. And so from the beginning the places of trust and honor were filled by warriors and orators." The inference was plain: "Beyond all question we have been on the wrong tack and should take a new departure."²⁹ With Virginia leading the way, this heedless iconoclasm swept the South. "If proselytism be the supreme joy of mankind," declared Henry Watterson in 1877, "New England must be pre-eminently happy, for the ambition of the South is to out-Yankee the Yankee."³⁰ There were even breaches in that irreducible citadel of Southernism—Mississippi. "We are in favor," announced a Vicksburg paper to a hushed Delta, "of the South, from the Potomac to the Rio Grande, being thoroughly and permanently Yankeeized."³¹

The facts of the record would not seem to warrant the contention that "whereas in England many from the middle class became captains of industry, here [in the South] the characteristic leadership proceeded from the aristocracy." According to this inter-

²⁸ *Richmond Whig and Advertiser*, April 4, 1876.

²⁹ *Industrial South*, V (1885), No. 3, p. 2.

³⁰ From a speech delivered in New York, quoted in *New York Tribune*, November 21, 1877.

³¹ *Vicksburg Herald*, quoted in *American*, II (1881), 166.

pretation, the English industrialists were "small men who struck it lucky," whereas the Southern mill men were "gentlemen."³² A study of the background of 254 industrialists in the South of this period reveals that "about eighty per cent came of nonslaveowning parentage." Out of a total of 300 studied only 13 per cent were of Northern birth.³³ Professor John Spencer Bassett, the historian, who took a peculiar delight in the rise of the new and the decline of the old ruling class, wrote that "The rise of the middle class has been the most notable thing connected with the white population of the South since the war. . . . Everywhere trade and manufacturing is almost entirely in the hands of men who are sprung from the non-planter class, and . . . the professions seem to be going the same way." As for the old planters, a decadent class, Bassett thought, "They have rarely held their own with others, and most frequently they have been in the upper ranks of those who serve rather than those who direct business. . . . But the captains of industry . . . are men who were never connected with the planter class."³⁴ A shrewd New England observer corroborated the Southerner's view when he wrote in 1890: "now, like a mighty apparition across the southern horizon, has arisen this hope or portent of the South,—the Third Estate,—to challenge the authority of the old ruling class." He advised his section against "exclusive observation of the old conflict of races" in the South. "For the coming decade, the place to watch the South is in this movement of the rising Third Estate. What it demands and what it can achieve in political, social, and industrial affairs . . . on these things will depend the fate of this important section of our country for years to come."³⁵

Mark Twain on a Southern junket in the eighties was brought face to face with these men of the New South: "Brisk men, energetic of movement and speech; the dollar their god, how to get it their religion."³⁶ Somewhat awkwardly, but with great show of

³² Mitchell and Mitchell, *Industrial Revolution in the South*, 32, 106.

³³ George W. Adams, unpublished paper quoted in Schlesinger, *Rise of the City*, 15 n. The industrialists studied were "random instances" from Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee.

³⁴ John S. Bassett, "The Industrial Decay of the Southern Planter," in *South Atlantic Quarterly* (Durham), II (1903), 112-13.

³⁵ A. D. Mayo, "The Third Estate of the South," in *New England Magazine* (Boston), N.S., III (1890-1891), 300.

³⁶ Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, 412.

self-assurance, this new man adjusted to his shoulders the mantle of leadership that had descended from the planter. Some considerable alteration was found necessary: less pride and more "push," for example. Punctilio was sacrificed to the exigencies of "bustle," and arrogance was found to be impracticable in the pursuit of the main chance.

Up and down the ranks of society the professions began to cut their garments to the new pattern. "The way of the successful author is pointed out by the successful business man," affirmed Bassett of Trinity College, an institution already associated with the Duke fortune. Professor Bassett found it to be "in harmony with the general social development here" that "the future of authorship in the South will be in the hands of the new men," men unburdened by the incubus of "the blood of a dozen generations of slaveowners." The businessman was the Southern author's best model, because he had "no prejudices against work, no habits of extravagance, and no false loyalty to the worn out ideas of a forgotten system."³⁷ Even the college student, paragon of conservatism, was reported to be abandoning "the pleasant vices, the midnight brawl, the lawless pranks, the roystering vagabondism of the old days," and, at least in Nashville, to be "earnestly intent upon business, preparing to promote a new progress."³⁸ Edmonds could report with a degree of truth that "the easy-going days of the South have passed away, never to return. . . . The South has learned that 'time is money.'"³⁹

For the ambitious if backward Southerner there were manuals of instruction in the new morals and manners. One, for example, entitled *The Law of Success*, appeared in 1885 under the imprint of the Southern Methodist Publishing House. The Southern author adduced his maxims empirically "from the crystallized experiences of twelve hundred successful men," for the most part Southerners who were "all self-made." His rules, "in harmony with all moral obligations," were primarily laid down for "success in private business." But they were also the assured "means by which to accomplish any purpose," including those of "artists, authors, bankers,

³⁷ John S. Bassett, "The Problems of the Author in the South," in *South Atlantic Quarterly*, I (1902), 207-208.

³⁸ Nashville *Daily American*, September 19, 1880.

³⁹ *Manufacturers' Record*, XIV (November 3, 1888), 11.

dentists, editors." The reader was instructed in "selecting a wife with a view to making his life a success," and in "the commercial value of the Ten Commandments and a righteous life." The theory was advanced that "even social calls and visiting the club-room may prove paying investments of one's time." Allegedly an educator himself, the author evidently kept up with the "trend" and perhaps was a little in advance. "The educator of the future," he wrote, "will teach his pupils what will pay best. He will teach them the art of thinking, which, for the purpose at hand, I may define to be the art of turning one's brains into money. He will not teach dead languages, obsolete formulas, and bric-a-brac sciences . . . which are never used in the ordinary transactions of the forum, the office, the shop, or the farm." The proof, again, was empirical: "The richest man in Arkansas never had any schooling whatever."⁴⁰

Well might Bishop Atticus G. Haygood ask, "Does History record an example in any race or age, where a people of strong character went so far in fifteen years as the Southern people—a race of Anglo-Saxon blood—have gone since 1865 in the modification of opinions, in the change of sentiments that had been, through generations, firmly fixed in all their thinking and feeling? The change in the opinions and sentiments of the Southern people since 1865 is one of the most wonderful facts of history."⁴¹

Perhaps the most curious aspect of the revolution in values, manners, and institutions that was daily leveling those distinctive traits that Godkin believed set the South as far apart from the North as Ireland was the romanticism that accompanied and partially obscured the process. For along with the glittering vision of a "metropolitan" and industrial South to come there developed a cult of archaism, a nostalgic vision of the past. One of the most significant inventions of the New South was the "Old South"—a new idea in the eighties, and a legend of incalculable potentialities.

The first step was the Lost Cause itself. In 1880, in the earlier and more abject stage of the Great Recantation, Watterson's paper could say blandly that "The 'bonny blue flag' is the symbol of nothing to the present generation of Southern men. . . . The

⁴⁰ William S. Speer, *The Law of Success* (Nashville, 1885), 5-8, 14, 19-20, 43, 84-85, 226.

⁴¹ Atticus G. Haygood, *Our Brother in Black: His Freedom and His Future* (Nashville, 1881), 101.

Southern Confederacy went down forever fifteen years ago. Its issues and ensigns went down with it."⁴² An exaggeration, to be sure, but such a statement, even a suggestion of it, ten years later would have been well-nigh unthinkable. By that time the official position on the progress of the Lost Cause was typified by the editor who declared simply, "It is not lost! On earth it may be lost forever. But might never did make right."⁴³ The deeper the involvements in commitments to the New Order, the louder the protests of loyalty to the Old.

Jefferson Davis, hardly the most popular Confederate official, was resurrected from his plantation exile in 1886 by Henry Grady (as one means of repairing the political fortunes of General Gordon) and borne in triumph up and down his old domain. Watterson's paper reported the progression "a continuous ovation." Standing on the spot in Montgomery where he had taken his oath as Confederate President twenty-five years before, Davis said, "Your demonstration now exceeds that which welcomed me then. This shows that the spirit of southern liberty is not dead."⁴⁴ An observer from Lowell, Massachusetts, declared the ovations were such "as no existing ruler in the world can obtain from his people, and such as probably were never before given to a public man, old, out of office, with no favors to dispense, and disfranchised!" He reported to Lowell that there must be "something great, and noble, and true in him and in the cause to evoke this homage."⁴⁵ Thus Yankeeedom took to its heart the Lost Cause—a favorite theme in Northern theaters in the nineties, and one not unknown to later generations. The composer of "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny," which glorified the old slave regime, was a native of Long Island and a descendant of slaves.⁴⁶ Southern romanticism was highly contagious.

Local reunions of Confederate brigades were known earlier, but it was not until 1889, in New Orleans, that the United Confederate Veterans was organized, with General Gordon "unanimously

⁴² Louisville *Courier-Journal*, September 7, 1880.

⁴³ Richmond *Times*, May 29, 1890.

⁴⁴ Richmond *Dispatch*, April 29, 1886; Louisville *Courier-Journal*, May 3, 1886.

⁴⁵ Lowell *Weekly Sun*, quoted in *Industrial South*, VI, (1886), 333.

⁴⁶ There was an ante-bellum song of the same name, but the familiar one was composed by James A. Bland in 1878.

elected general commander." Lacking the lucrative incentive of Corporal James Tanner's billions extracted from the public treasury for the G.A.R., the commanders of the U.C.V. nevertheless mobilized hosts of ragged Confederates, who thronged to the annual reunions. At the reunion in Richmond in 1896 thousands, many without money, slept in "all the parks, on roofs, on doorsteps, in yards, and even in the streets." Upwards of 10,000 veterans attended, 444 from Texas, and spent the day cheering Mrs. Davis and her daughter ("the chivalric Gordon at the head of the procession") and listening to oratory. The "Adjutant General" reported to Gordon at this session that his office had "now become a vast bureau, with an enormous accumulation of books and papers," conducting an immense correspondence. To the reunion in the same city eleven years later were attracted 80,000 people.⁴⁷

In 1895 the United Daughters of the Confederacy was organized in the capital of the New South, Atlanta. Only then, when the movement was taken into custody by Southern Womanhood, did the cult of the Lost Cause assume a religious character. Monuments were planted in courthouse squares—usually the figure of a soldier facing North, gun in hand. "Our Confederate Column" of the *Richmond Dispatch* had its manifold counterparts, filled with reminiscences, dying words, heroes of godlike mold, battles, skirmishes, and alarums, often giving the impression of news fresh from the front. A week before Bryan was nominated in Chicago, on the occasion of a veterans' reunion, the *Richmond Times* devoted nineteen of its twenty-four pages to the Confederacy and the Old South, and its rival, the *Dispatch*, not to be outdone, twenty of its twenty-four pages. It is a matter for speculation whether any lost cause in modern history, from that of Bonnie Prince Charlie to that of Wilhelm's legions, has received the devotion lavished upon the Stars and Bars.

The romanticism and sentimentality of that generation of Southerners, however, was too copious to spend itself upon the Lost Cause. Genealogy became the avocation of thousands. Its more esoteric branches yielded their treasures to seekers after the heritage of grandeur. The fabled Southern aristocracy, long on its last legs,

⁴⁷ *Richmond Times*, July 2, 1896; *Richmond Dispatch*, June 30, 1896; *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 5, 1907.

was refurbished, its fancied virtues and vices, airs and attitudes exhumed and admired. Homage even from the plain man, who for ages had been unimpressed by doings of the upper crust, was added in this period. Drippings from the plantation legend overflowed upon race and labor relations, public charities, and even the organization of factory villages. The Natchez Cotton Mills were adorned with "three spires or turrets of mansard style to give them grace and beauty," and the Female Institute of Columbia, Tennessee, boasted in an advertisement of "its resemblance to the old castles of song and story, with its towers, turreted walls, and ivy-mantled porches."

Mark Twain saw the paradox, but only through the glasses of his age and therefore darkly: "practical common-sense, progressive ideas, and progressive works, mixed up with the duel, the inflated speech, and the jejune romanticism of an absurd past that is dead."⁴⁸ Henry James came closer with a cast of one of his loose, netlike sentences. "The collapse of the old order," he speculated, "the humiliation of defeat, the bereavement and bankruptcy involved, represented, with its obscure miseries and tragedies, the social revolution the most unrecorded and undepicted, in proportion to its magnitude, that ever was; so that this reversion of the starved spirit to the things of the heroic age, the four epic years, is a definite soothing salve."⁴⁹

In addition, the South suffered from a prevailing sense of inferiority and a constant need for justifying a position. But the really curious thing is that oftener than not this archaic romanticism, this idealizing of the past, proceeded from the mouths of the most active propagandists for the New Order. And this with no apparent sense of inconsistency, certainly none of duplicity. It is true, as already pointed out, that Tompkins (who penned romantic pictures of "Life in the Old South") elaborated a theory to prove that the New South was merely a revival of the "true" genius of the Old South, as it existed prior to certain heresies. Edmonds went so far as to scorn the very name "New South," insisting that it was "simply a revival of the South as it existed thirty-five years ago," that is, in

⁴⁸ Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, 468.

⁴⁹ Henry James, *The American Scene* (New York, 1907), 371.

1860!⁵⁰ But such strained rationalizations did not embarrass the oratory of Henry Grady, of the young Woodrow Wilson, or even of Walter Hines Page, all of whom paid reverent homage to ancestral shrines. Joel Chandler Harris worked for Grady in the *Atlanta Constitution's* editorial hatchery with no consciousness of serving two masters. After all, if the United Confederate Veterans could follow John B. Gordon as the living embodiment of the legend, what need was there for awkward rationalizations!

The bitter mixture of recantation and heresy could never have been swallowed so readily had it not been dissolved in the syrup of romanticism. Political servants of the New Order used this formula to advantage. In 1894, when the tide of Populism was rising fearfully, Senator Matt W. Ransom's political fortunes were foundering in North Carolina. The mayor of Charlotte wrote him that "The country people, as it seems to us, are at present against you." Then he proposed a well-tested stratagem: "getting Genl Gordon to deliver his lecture on 'the last days of the Confederacy' inviting the country people, and getting him to make an allusion to you!"⁵¹

No paradox of the New South was more conspicuous than the contrast between the earnestly professed code of shopkeeper decorum and sobriety and the continued adherence to a tradition of violence. For violence was, if anything, more characteristic of the new society than of the old. In the place of the code duello, the traditional expression of violence in the Old South, gunplay, knifing, manslaughter, and murder were the bloody accompaniments of the march of Progress. The old state of South Carolina, with less than a quarter of the six New England states' population, reported nearly three times their number of homicides in 1890. For all its cities and slums and unassimilated immigrants, Massachusetts had only 16 homicides as compared with 65 in Virginia, 69 in North Carolina, 88 in Kentucky, 92 in Georgia, and 115 in Tennessee. Yet none of the Southern states mentioned came within a quarter of a million of the population of Massachusetts, and all were among those having the highest percentage of native, rural

⁵⁰ Quoted indirectly in New Orleans *Times-Democrat*, November 10, 1895.

⁵¹ R. J. Brevard to M. W. Ransom, July 3, 1894, in M. W. Ransom Papers (University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill).

population. In the western tiers of states, Michigan had 31 homicides and Alabama 108, Wisconsin 20 and Mississippi 106, Minnesota 21 and Louisiana 98. Kansas and Nebraska were no further removed from frontier conditions than was Texas, but the Northern states reported respectively 34 and 23 homicides and Texas 184. Yet the census figures were admittedly unreliable, since they fell far short of the actual number of homicides, especially those of the rural, sparsely settled areas.⁵² A Kentucky editor published figures in 1885 demonstrating that there had been an average of 223 murders a year for the past six years in Kentucky, though the census returned only 50 for 1880; and a Mississippi paper declared in 1879 that there was an average of a murder a day in that state, while the census of the following year reported only 57.⁵³ It is not improbable that the amount of homicide was two or three times that reported.⁵⁴ Italy, with what appeared to be the highest homicide rate in Europe, did not have in her prisons in 1890 as many convicts charged with murder as did the South Central states, which had less than a third of Italy's population.⁵⁵ The South seems to have been one of the most violent communities of comparable size in all Christendom.

The record of violence should not be hastily attributed to the Negro, for at least in South Carolina, Kentucky, and Texas white men killed much more often, in proportion to their numbers, than did Negroes. Race violence there was, undoubtedly, but it was only a part of the general milieu of Southern violence and can be understood best against that background. Nor could lower-class whites bear disproportionate blame, for the newspapers of the day were crowded with homicidal frays between lawyers, planters, railroad presidents, doctors, even preachers, and particularly editors. Guns blazed in banks, courtrooms, and schoolhouses as well as in bars

⁵² On the unreliability of homicide data, see Bureau of the Census, *Special Reports, Mortality Statistics, 1900-1904* (Washington, 1906), cv-cvi; for the above figures, see *Eleventh Census, 1890, Vital and Social Statistics*, Pt. III, *Statistics of Deaths*, 27-425; to compare 1880, see *Tenth Census, 1880, XII, Mortality and Vital Statistics*, Pt. II, 388-427.

⁵³ Hardinsburg (Ky.) *Breckinridge News*, in Clark, *Southern Country Editor*, 223; Vicksburg *Herald*, May 25, 1879.

⁵⁴ Horace V. Redfield, *Homicide, North and South* (Philadelphia, 1880), 172.

⁵⁵ Burr J. Ramage, "Homicide in the Southern States," in *Sewanee Review* (Sewanee, Tenn.), IV (1895-1896), 221.

and ginhouses. Casualties were fewer in the spectacular mountain feuds than in bustling towns of the lowlands. And the immediate causes were often absurdly trivial. Of the quarrels resulting in the shooting of five men on one day in a Mississippi county, two arose over the opening of doors and two over petty debts. Dueling persisted, but in diminishing proportions. In one year there were 128 homicides and only 3 duels in South Carolina. In place of the relatively civilized duel there arose the barbarous custom of "shooting-on-sight." According to Southern editors dedicated to reform, the practice of toting a pistol was "almost universal" in some parts. The state auditor of Alabama in 1881 reported the valuation of tools and farming implements in his state to be \$305,613; that of guns, pistols, and dirks, \$354,247.⁵⁶ Turning the chronicles of Southern communities—Edgefield, Vicksburg, Memphis—one is reminded forcefully at times of Marlowe's London, or the Highlands of the wild Scots.

Another anachronism from the Old Order that contrasted queerly with the new society was a lingering grace and simplicity of life. Even its detractors could not quite deny the persistence of this heritage from the country life of ante-bellum Virginia, Carolina, and the Bluegrass. Of the two relics—the heritage of violence and that of grace—the former undoubtedly had more to feed upon in the new society and proved the hardier tradition. Grace and gallantry were more vulnerable to the new climate of push and progress and survived only in sheltered places. Specious varieties of the genuine article were, of course, cultivated for the tourist trade, adopted sedulously by the ancestor societies and the *nouveaux riches* (of Northern as well as Southern origins), and associated in numerous ways known to the advertiser's art with brands of tobacco, liquor, stage beauties, and politicians. When the New South was personified by the cartoonist it was, significantly, in the garb of the ante-bellum planter.

⁵⁶ *Nation*, XXXVI (1883), 14; also Redfield, *Homicide, North and South*, 90, 95-96, 101, 151-52, 159, 202; Ramage, "Homicide in the Southern States," *loc. cit.*, 215-19, 222-23; Clark, *Southern Country Editor*, 218-23; Nathaniel S. Shaler, "The Peculiarities of the South," in *North American Review*, CLI (1890), 487. In 1913 the homicide rate in Southern cities was 21.2 per 100,000 population and in Eastern cities 5.6. Frederick L. Hoffman, *The Homicide Problem* (Newark, 1925), 23.

Distressed at the poverty of Southern achievement in the arts and sciences during this period, Nathaniel Southgate Shaler speculated on the reasons for "the failure of the Kentucky people to make good their promise." He ascribed it to "a peculiar combination of circumstances, of which the Civil War was the most potent," especially the resulting sacrifice of life. "This sacrifice," he wrote, "was in peculiarly large measure from the intellectual, the state-shaping class," and it was made in the South "in far larger proportion than the Northern states." Before the war he had seen evidence that "men and women were seeking, through history, literature, the fine arts, and in some measure through science, for a share in the higher life. Four years of civil war . . . made an end of this and set the people on a moral and intellectual plane lower than they occupied when they were warring with the wilderness and the savages."⁵⁷

As a matter of fact, Shaler's own career, filled with achievement and renown in geology, was partial refutation of his picture of intellectual barrenness. In his own bluegrass South there was an unusual burst of scientific activity in the eighties. A thriving group of geologists, among them Robert Peter and John R. Proctor, flourished in Kentucky. Lucien Carr, another Kentuckian, won high praise among ethnologists for his studies of the Mound Builders of the Mississippi Valley, and Ellen Churchill Semple of Louisville later became a pioneer in human geography. Edward E. Barnard of Tennessee achieved international fame as an astronomer, and J. Lawrence Smith of Louisville made significant contributions in chemistry. Alert surgeons of the region maintained productive medical schools and flourishing professional journals and established the first state board of health in Tennessee in 1877 and in Kentucky in 1878.⁵⁸

Apart from the sciences and the more practical arts the picture was darker. Even those creative spirits who survived the ordeal of

⁵⁷ *The Autobiography of Nathaniel Southgate Shaler* (New York, 1909), 76-77. Mr. Justice Holmes wrote a concurring opinion: "the best part of the South was simply wiped out." Oliver Wendell Holmes to Sir Frederick Pollock, April 25, 1920, in Mark A. de Wolfe (ed.), *Holmes-Pollock Letters* (Cambridge, 1941), II, 40-41.

⁵⁸ F. Garvin Davenport, "Scientific Interests in Kentucky and Tennessee, 1870-1890," in *Journal of Southern History*, XIV (1948), 500-21.

war and clung to their purpose found the odds heavily against them. Sidney Lanier's nightmarish struggle against poverty and hemorrhages was only one of the tragedies of the period. Lanier, however, was more fortunate than some; he found a berth for the last three years of his life, first at the Peabody Institute and then (from 1879 to 1881) at the newly founded Johns Hopkins University. A mixture of the Old and the New Order, Baltimore was at one and the same time the last refuge of the Confederate spirit in exile and a lying-in hospital for the birth of the New Order. There William H. Browne's *Southern Magazine* expired in 1875 and Albert T. Bledsoe's *Southern Review*, in 1879; there also the first number of Edmond's *Manufacturers' Record* appeared in 1882; and there Basil L. Gildersleeve wrote his *Creed of the Old South*. To Baltimore came the young Southerners—Walter Hines Page, Woodrow Wilson, and scores of others—to hesitate between the Old and the New. Gildersleeve and about a third of the Hopkins faculty were Southerners.

Others found no refuge. Paul Hamilton Hayne lived in this period near Augusta, Georgia, in a shack furnished with goods boxes and papered by his wife with pictures cut from magazines, like the shacks of Negro croppers. Praise for his verse came from Tennyson and Swinburne, and he continued to write at the carpenter's bench that served him as a desk. Virtually his only associates were the illiterate crackers who worked at a nearby sawmill. He lived in the shack until his death in 1886.

Perhaps Shaler's gloomy analysis and Edward King's belief that "a generation has been doomed" were overstatements of the case. Yet multiple instances of frustration could be cited to support those views. "There's failure in the very air," declared one of Ellen Glasgow's young Virginians. And he echoed a hundred aspirations when he exclaimed, "No, I want to get away, not to spend my life as a missionary to the broomsedge."⁵⁹

Flight was an all-too-common impulse. The swelling migration of Southern talent to the Northeast began quite early. Shaler himself was one instance. The leading American architect of the period, Henry Hobson Richardson, was born on a Louisiana plantation and educated in New Orleans, Harvard, and Paris. In the

⁵⁹ Ellen Glasgow, *Barren Ground* (New York, 1925), 112.

seventies and eighties his buildings sprinkled the entire country—with the exception of his native region. Likewise, John Wellborn Root of Georgia won his fame as an architect entirely in the North. Joseph Le Conte and his brother John, Georgians, gained high distinction as scientists in California but found no opportunity at home after 1865. The South of the eighties was a bleak place for the young scholar. "The studious man is pronounced impractical and is suspected as a visionary," wrote young Woodrow Wilson from Atlanta in 1883.⁶⁰ Wilson soon left for the Johns Hopkins to prepare for a teaching career, a career he pursued outside the South. Walter Hines Page took his departure for the golden cities about the same time, flinging back a farewell to the "mummies" of North Carolina. The South could have its own golden cities and skyscrapers, he prophesied, if it would only forget "constitutional questions which have been irrevocably settled."⁶¹ Page left for New York "dead broke." In ten years he had put the *Forum* on its feet, become editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and, to keep a hand in the work of converting his unregenerate homeland, acquired part ownership of the *Manufacturers' Record*.⁶² His headquarters, however, remained in Boston and New York.

Withdrawal of the artist or critic sometimes became a secession that was spiritual as well as physical, and resulted not only in the alienation of the writer from his people but in a schism within the spirit of the man himself. A recurrent tragedy in the intellectual history of the South, this phenomenon had its cruder prototype in Hinton Rowan Helper, and its clearest example from this period in George W. Cable, the novelist. Cable's story, complicated by psychological crosscurrents, by the heritage of a hapless Virginian father and a mother of New England stock against a Creole background of New Orleans, presents too many complexities to unravel here. The crisis of the conflict within him, however, is described in his own words. As he watched the "great Reconstruction agony

⁶⁰ Woodrow Wilson to Robert H. Dabney, May 11, 1883, in Ray S. Baker, *Woodrow Wilson; Life and Letters* (Garden City, 1927-1939), I, 169.

⁶¹ Burton J. Hendrick, *The Training of an American; The Earlier Life and Letters of Walter H. Page, 1855-1913* (Boston, 1928), 146.

⁶² In 1895 Page was the second largest stockholder, Edmonds the largest. "List of Stockholders, May 23, 1895," filed under the name of Richard H. Edmonds in Walter Hines Page Papers (Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge).

from its first day to its last," Cable found his emotions deeply torn—"with his sympathies ranged upon the pro-Southern side of the issue, and his convictions drifting irresistibly to the other," he wrote. The pull of his convictions and of New England eventually asserted themselves. In 1885, the year Page left for New York, Cable published *The Silent South*, the most radical indictment of Southern racial policy written by a Southerner in that period, and in 1885 he moved his family to Northampton, Massachusetts. He had the right, as he said, to speak as "a native of Louisiana, an ex-Confederate soldier, and a lover of my home, my city, and my State."⁶³ Yet he never again lived in the South. Both Cable and his people were losers—the writer, of his art, which never fulfilled its rich promise; the South, of a fearless critic and a point of view that could thenceforth be more readily dismissed complacently as foreign. Later Cable would look homeward and melt with ruth: "I felt that I belonged still," he wrote, "peculiarly to the South."⁶⁴

It was in the field of fiction that the postwar generation found fullest expression. The Southern literary revival of the eighties came with a concentration and suddenness that made it unique in the region's history. There were a few transitional figures—the poets Hayne and Lanier, the story-writer Richard M. Johnston—but all of the new major writers burst upon the national consciousness about the same time. Whatever lasting fame these writers were to earn was to depend, with striking similarity and quite regardless of the extent of later publication, upon one or two books, in each case their earliest. All of these books appeared between 1879 and 1887. Cable's *Old Creole Days* was published in 1879, *The Grandis-simes* in 1880, and *Madame Delphine* in 1881. Irwin Russell of Mississippi, precursor of the dialect school, died in 1879 at the age of twenty-six. Joel Chandler Harris' *Uncle Remus* appeared in 1881 and his *Mingo* in 1884, Thomas Nelson Page's *In Ole Virginia* in 1887,⁶⁵ "Charles Egbert Craddock's" *In the Tennessee Mountains* and *Where the Battle Was Fought* in 1884. A dozen lesser

⁶³ George W. Cable, *The Silent South* (New York, 1885), 25, 47.

⁶⁴ Lucy L. C. Bickel, *George W. Cable: His Life and Letters* (New York, 1928), 162; see also Arlin Turner, "George W. Cable, Novelist and Reformer," in *South Atlantic Quarterly*, XLVIII (1949), 539-45.

⁶⁵ "Marse Chan," the most famous story in the collection, was first published in 1884, after the publisher had held it four years.

luminaries, among them Grace King and Kate Chopin, took their first bows within the same years.

It was a propitious moment to gain the national eye. The decline of New England's long dominance, New York's neglect of Melville and Whitman, and the subsidence of the vogue enjoyed by the West in the seventies had cleared the stage for the New South. The ninth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1886, in a badly out-dated article on "American Literature," said that Southern letters, "mainly by their connection with the North," had been "saved from sinking to the level of Mexico or the Antilles." Yet the following year the New York *Critic* declared that "Southern literature is a sort of craze" and complained of the "excessive praises" lavished on it.⁶⁶ In 1888 Albion W. Tourgée, hardly a pro-Southern critic, observed in the *Forum* that "A foreigner studying our current literature, without knowledge of our history, and judging our civilization by our fiction would undoubtedly conclude that the South was the seat of intellectual empire in America, and the African the chief romantic element of our population." As evidence, he pointed out that a few months before "every one of our great popular monthlies presented a 'Southern story' as one of its most prominent features; and during the past year nearly two-thirds of the stories and sketches furnished to newspapers by various syndicates have been of this character." The Southern revival, then, was a national as well as a regional phenomenon, called forth, in part, by a freakishly romantic turn of Northern fancy. Indeed, according to Tourgée, "it cannot be denied that American fiction to-day, whatever its origin, is predominantly Southern in type and character"; not only that, but "distinctly Confederate in sympathy."⁶⁷

If credit for the revival be assigned in the South, it would be a mistake to overlook Joel Chandler Harris. "What strange habitations does genius choose among men," observed the sleekly groomed

⁶⁶ Anonymous, "Literature in the South," in *Critic* (New York), VII (1887), 322-23.

⁶⁷ Albion W. Tourgée, "The South as a Field for Fiction," in *Forum*, VI (1888-1889), 406-407. According to Shields McIlwaine, *The Southern Poor-White from Lubberland to Tobacco Road* (Norman, 1939), 100, "Between 1882 and 1887, the annual average of articles published on the South was about ten times that during the preceding eighty years."

Walter Hines Page, noting the "red unkempt hair," "the freckled face and freckled hands" of "Joe Harris."⁶⁸ This shy, inveterate countryman, illegitimate son of an itinerant Irish laborer, could write unflattering truths of literacy criticism. "The stuff we are in the habit of calling Southern literature," he wrote in 1879, "is not only a burlesque upon true literary art, but a humiliation and a disgrace to the people whose culture it is supposed to represent. . . . The truth might as well be told: we have no Southern literature worthy of the name."⁶⁹ Writing across a desk from where Henry Grady was exhorting the South to exploit her "mountains stored with exhaustless treasures," Harris was telling the Southerner with idle literary capital that "all around him, untouched, undeveloped, undisturbed, unique and original, as new as the world, as old as life" were literary materials of unparalleled richness. "But they must be mined. They must be run through the stamp mill," he added.⁷⁰

With a zeal approaching that of the speculators who were combing the Piedmont for mining stakes, the literary prospectors began a veritable gold rush to the unexplored corners of the region—and much they unearthed that glittered. Scratch the surface, they believed, and one would find "local color," picturesqueness, quaintness. Provided with the divining rod of current literary fashion, they could not have wished for richer deposits of the material they sought. Where else could one unearth such a variety of "types": cove-locked mountaineers of the Smokies, ex-slaves who practiced voodoo and told African fables that were philological nuggets, picturesque poor whites, decadent aristocrats, homespun provincials, romantic Creoles, and Cajuns along every bayou? Harris' success with Negro dialect in *Uncle Remus* precipitated a national flood of dialect literature. Again Southern resources led the boom. Did not "our contemporary ancestors" still speak "Shakespeare's English"? Not to mention Sea-Island Gullah, Cajun patois, and poor-white English!

It would be stretching a point to claim Lafcadio Hearn for the

⁶⁸ Hendrick, *Earlier Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, 149.

⁶⁹ Atlanta *Constitution*, quoted in *Harper's Weekly*, XXIV (1880), 19.

⁷⁰ Quoted in Cary McWilliams, "Localism in American Criticism," in *Southwest Review* (Dallas), XIX (1933-1934), 422-23.

Southern revival, in spite of his ten years in New Orleans, from 1877 to 1887, several of them on Major Burke's *Times-Democrat*. In fact, both of these strange birds of passage took flight about the same time—Major Burke to seek the gold of Honduras, Lafcadio in quest of the golden women of Martinique. It was in his New Orleans years that Hearn achieved his first recognition, however, and *Chita* (1889) was not unrelated to the milieu of "Marse Chan" (1884). Nor did Hearn misrepresent the mood of his Southern contemporaries when he exclaimed, "I have pledged me to the worship of the Odd, the Queer, the Strange, the Exotic, the Monstrous"—with the possible exception of the last named of his idols.⁷¹

Not that the outpourings of the eighties were alien to the spirit of the New South. On the contrary they gave expression to many of its moods, especially its florid romanticism. "And the Southerner, be he never so progressive," wrote progressive Professor Edwin Mims of Thomas Nelson Page, "cannot but now and then sigh, amid some of the raw expressions of the new South, for the charm and leisure of the old."⁷² And what delectable sighs! What bitter-sweet tears washed Nashville's grimy cheeks over Page's *In Ole Virginia!* "Dem wuz good ole times, marster—de bes Sam ever see! Dey wuz in fac'! Niggers didn' hed nothin' 'tall to do." Embarrassing race conflict dissolved in liquid dialect, angry Populist farmers became merely quaint in Billy Sanders' vernacular, depression rolled aside, and for a moment, "de ole times done come back again."

Boston and New York shared the illusion and cheered the dashing Confederates. Even the polemical literature of the South in ante-bellum years had not lavished such praise upon the plantation legend. Yankee imitators of the Dixie school sought to outdo it in sentimentality. Maud Howe, daughter of the composer of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," declared in her novel *Atalanta in the South* (1886) that the Negro was happier in slavery than in freedom; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, onetime militant abolitionist and commander of a Negro regiment, dissolved in tears over "Marse Chan." A favorite theme of the Southern school and its Northern imitators was "reconciliation," preached with

⁷¹ Lafcadio Hearn to W. D. O'Connor, June 29, 1884, in Elizabeth Bisland, *Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1906), I, 328.

⁷² Edwin Mims, "Thomas Nelson Page," in *Atlantic Monthly*, C (1907), 113.

little more subtlety than in Grady's orations or Edmonds' editorials. The conventional ending of their novels was a union between Confederate heroine and true-blue Federal hero. Bronson Howard outdid the novelists by uniting *five* such lovelorn pairs in his play *Shenandoah* (1889). By 1892 it seemed entirely appropriate for the Boston *Atlantic Monthly* to publish Gildersleeve's "Creed of the Old South," an uncompromising panegyric.⁷³

The Southern school, like the rest of the country, was, of course, inundated by Victorian prudery—all except Hearn, who complained of "a Sunday-school atmosphere" about Cable. Harris assured his publisher that "In all my writings you will find nothing that cannot be read and explained to a young girl." *The White Rose of Memphis*, a novel by Colonel William Falkner⁷⁴ of Mississippi, was characterized by another Mississippian in 1882 as "hallowed with an atmosphere of purity and sweetness." It probably was.

For all their shortcomings and the comparative brevity of the revival (it reached its peak by 1887), the Southern writers undeniably possessed solid virtues. Among them, however, one will search in vain for a realistic portrayal of their own times. But for an occasional interest of Harris and Cable, the writers were too preoccupied with their quaint "types" of the hinterland to notice what was going on in their own parlors. The importation of shoddy standards from the North and the encroachment of rank indigenous evils, the preachment of an alien ethics, and the spreading helotry among the farmers went largely unchallenged in their pages. "Life, as a whole," philosophized the rising Kentucky novelist James Lane Allen in 1885, "presents a scene of happiness and success; shall the novel of life present a spectacle of wretchedness and failure?"⁷⁵

⁷³ These and other illustrations of Yankee acquiescence are ably discussed in Buck, *Road to Reunion*, 220-35. See also, Francis P. Gaines, *The Southern Plantation: A Study in the Development and the Accuracy of a Tradition* (New York, 1924), 81-82.

⁷⁴ The grandfather of the novelist, William Faulkner, though he spelled his name differently. A veteran of General Nathan B. Forrest's raiders, Colonel Falkner, besides writing a novel, found time to build a local railroad, fight many duels, and kill his quota of opponents. He was finally shot dead in the main street of his home town by a former friend and business associate in a shoot-on-sight fray for which he refused to arm himself. *Mississippi, A Guide to the Magnolia State* (New York, 1938), 456-58.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Grant C. Knight, *James Lane Allen and the Genteel Tradition* (Chapel Hill, 1935), 53.

Joel Harris knew better than that, but he clung tenaciously to the doctrine of neighborly love that among his Middle Georgia countrymen ("the most democratic people the world has ever seen," he thought) proved the talisman against all evil. Why not, then, among sections and races and classes, however estranged? On that theory, at least, he tried to believe that Atlanta was only an enlargement of Snap Bean Farm.⁷⁶

As acknowledged shepherds of Southern folds, the Protestant clergy enjoyed a position that was unchallenged in this period. "There is no part of the world in which ministers of the Gospel are more respected than in the Southern States," declared a distinguished minister in 1885.⁷⁷ This was more fact than boast. Bishop Haygood was on equally safe ground when he observed that since the Civil War "The controlling sentiment of the Southern people in city and hamlet, in camp and field, among the white and the black, has been religious."⁷⁸

Observers from outside the region were struck by Southern religiosity. "The South is by a long way the most simply and sincerely religious country that I was ever in," wrote an English traveler. "In other countries men are apt to make a private matter of their religion . . . ; but the Southerner wears his upon his sleeve."⁷⁹ Northerners were prone to account for the trait after the manner of Warner, who wrote that "Life in the South is still on simpler terms than in the North, and society is not so complex." He found the people "more frank and impulsive . . . it may be less calculating." A New York journalist wrote that "There is everywhere much of primitive-simplicity in their methods of life and in their manners and character." On all hands he heard talk of "things marvelous, supernatural and impossible generally . . . the same as that

⁷⁶ John Donald Wade, "Profits and Losses in the Life of Joel Chandler Harris," in *American Review* (New York), I (1933), 17-35.

⁷⁷ Dr. O. P. Fitzgerald, quoted in Hunter D. Farish, *The Circuit Rider Dis-mounts; A Social History of Southern Methodism, 1865-1900* (Richmond, 1938), 105.

⁷⁸ Atticus G. Haygood, *The New South: Gratitude, Amendment, Hope . . .* (Oxford, Ga., 1880), 9-10.

⁷⁹ Sir William Archer, *Through Afro-America: An English Reading of the Race Problem* (London, 1910), 73-74.

which was heard a quarter of a century ago in the log cabins of . . . Indiana."⁸⁰

Evangelical fervor, revivalism, camp meetings, mass conversions were no new phenomena in the South. But in this period, religious zeal was abnormally intensified. Membership in the Southern Methodist Church, lower in 1866 than in 1854, doubled in the fifteen years following the war. The greatest gains were made when revivalism was at highest pitch, and the eighties were "a time of extraordinary revivals." Net gain in members of the Methodist Church in 1885 was the highest in its history, and a rapid rate of growth was maintained throughout the century.⁸¹ Scenes recalling the Wesleyan revivals of early industrial England were not unknown to the New South. It was the heyday of such masters of pulpit demagoguery as Sam Jones. "When I get up to preach," said the Reverend Mr. Jones, "all I do is to KNOCK OUT THE BUNG and let nature cut her caper." Thousands thronged the special trains that ran to his performances to witness these wonders of nature. "His power is felt not only by the lower classes . . . but by the purely intellectual as well," it was reported.⁸²

To a remarkable degree this religious ferment was the work of only two Protestant sects, the Methodists and the Baptists, which in the middle eighties were said to have "very nearly a monopoly of church membership" in eight Southern states. "In Alabama and Mississippi the members of these two sects . . . [made up] 95 per cent. of the total church membership; in Georgia, 94 per cent.; in Florida, 93; in South Carolina, 91; in North Carolina, 86; in Virginia, 81"—this, as compared with a little over 47 per cent accounted for by the two sects in church membership of the nation as a whole. Thus the Methodists and Baptists had about twice the relative strength in the South that they had in the whole country.⁸³

Edwin A. Alderman, president of the University of Virginia, contended that "The fancied home of the cavalier is the home of

⁸⁰ Warner, *Studies in the South and West*, 32; New York *Tribune*, March 11, 1881.

⁸¹ Farish, *Circuit Rider Dismounts*, 69, 74-76.

⁸² Nashville *Daily American*, June 6, 1887; Jackson *Clarion*, April 28, 1886.

⁸³ *Nation*, XLI (1885), 211.

the nearest approach to puritanism and to the most vital protestant evangelicalism in the world to-day."⁸⁴

Further evidence of the strength of Southern puritanism—or perhaps, more accurately, the surrender to the middle class—was the increase of blue laws, and restrictions of various sorts aimed at the saloon, the prize fight, and what a leading Methodist journal called "one of the antechambers of hell," the theater. Even before the Civil War all the Southern states except Virginia and Tennessee had experimented with local prohibition of saloons through special state legislation, a method peculiar to the South. In 1874 Arkansas, Kentucky, and North Carolina, and in 1876, Texas, supplemented their special laws with general local-option laws for townships. The eighties saw a burst of prohibition activity. This took the form of general county local-option laws in Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and North Carolina, and local option for townships in South Carolina and Virginia. "Blind tiger" and "scientific temperance education" laws were becoming popular.⁸⁵ An editor in sinful New Orleans might denounce "the Medieval bigotry and religious tyranny" of Sunday blue laws in adjacent states, but it is the conclusion of a scholar that Sabbath observance prevailed "to a greater extent in the South than in any other section."⁸⁶

The rupture between North and South had come earliest in the great Protestant sects, and there it was slowest to heal. The Northern branches sought to imitate the state during Reconstruction in using force to effect union, sometimes seizing Southern churches and their funds by force. They were bitterly and effectively resisted by Southern churchmen. The Northern "connections" then established their own churches in the South and the struggle continued. "We claim the South," declared the New York *Christian Advocate* in 1879, "because the Republic which we have recently saved by Methodist conscience and Methodist bayonets, now demands at our hands another salvation by Methodist ideas and faith."

⁸⁴ Edwin A. Alderman, *The Growing South* (New York, 1908), 20.

⁸⁵ Leonard S. Blakey, *The Sale of Liquor in the South*, in *Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law*, LI, Whole No. 127 (New York, 1912), 12, and Table I, 39.

⁸⁶ New Orleans *Times-Democrat*, November 8, 1895; Farish, *Circuit Rider Dis-mounts*, 340.

Missionaries established Northern journals in the South, one of which in New Orleans based its right to leadership on the theory "that New England has developed a stronger arm, a more active brain, a greater love of freedom, and a higher form of civilization." Another in Atlanta announced in 1881: "There is a struggle now going on as to the character of the Methodism of the future in this section. Shall it be under American or southern ideas? This is the bone of contention between us and the Southern Church."⁸⁷

As a result of the continuation of a temporal struggle on an ecclesiastical plane, and of the clerical championship of the Southern cause after the surrender and defection of its secular defenders, the Southern churches became for a time centers of resistance to the invasion of Northern culture. "All through the South," noted a Northern observer in 1881, "the ministers appear to view 'progress' with a degree of alarm, and certainly with decided reprobation. I should say that Southern ministers very generally appear to feel instinctively that it brings new dangers to religious institutions."⁸⁸ The attitude was expressed in the leading religious journals. "Let us have a rest on this sort of talk we have had about the New South," demanded one. "It begins to sound like cant. It seems to cast unjust reproaches upon the dead." And again, "When Mammonism thus possesses the people they soon become prepared to make almost any concession of moral principle to the demands of commercial expediency. . . . Cursed be the wealth which comes to us at such a price! Blessed be the poverty which gives us immunity from such temptations."⁸⁹ A churchman of Chapel Hill, warning the flock against "the perils in the New South," wrote, "Nothing is surer than that much of the lauded change in the South consists mainly in the *money-mania*. . . . The standard of character erected by the blatant portion of the New South—that portion that reviles the Old South—is the *brazen* standard of money making."⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Quoted in Farish, *Circuit Rider Dismounts*, 108-109, 117-18. For evidence of a similar struggle in the Presbyterian Church, see Thomas Cary Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Benjamin Morgan Palmer* (Richmond, 1906), 440, 457, 472-74.

⁸⁸ New York *Tribune*, March 11, 1881.

⁸⁹ Nashville *Christian Advocate*, March 5, 26, 1887.

⁹⁰ A. W. Mangum, letter, *ibid.*, May 14, 1887.

For a time the churches showed a disposition to take up cudgels against "mammonism" in its secular entrenchments. "Nearly all the necessities of life," affirmed the Nashville *Christian Advocate*, in 1888, "are now controlled by 'the trusts,' even to the medicine for the healing of the sick, the oil that feeds the light. . . . Nothing escapes the extortion of these worst publicans the world ever saw."⁹¹ Increasingly, however, as the churches, with their huge publishing houses, their large investments in colleges, universities and schools, and their private endowments became vested interests, and as they became dependent upon the "publicans" North and South—the tobacco trust, for example, and various Northern philanthropic endowments—the earlier tendency faded. The "blessed poverty" that gives "immunity from temptations" seemed less important than a suitable endowment. Old-fashioned sins, like that of the bottle, came to absorb the attention of the churches with crusades for temperance and prohibition. Presidents of handsomely endowed church universities, and publications, such as the *Biblical Recorder* of the North Carolina Baptists, became defenders of the trusts. Publicans and sinners of the newer type had less to fear from ecclesiastical wrath in later years, and the New Order and its standards and values received little more criticism from the clergy than it had from the writers.

In the dustbins of the eighties—where the eighties hastily swept them—are the remains of an elaborately reasoned critique of the Brave New South. The critique was identified with the Lost Cause, since the men who proclaimed it, men like Robert L. Dabney of Virginia and Charles Colcock Jones of Georgia, wore the uniform of the Confederacy and spoke in its name and memory. The doctrines they pronounced, however, like the style in which they pronounced them, were closer to the eighteenth than to the nineteenth century, closer to Thomas Jefferson than to Jefferson Davis. They were more like the polemics of John Taylor of Caroline against the Federalists than those of Robert Barnwell Rhett against the Abolitionists. They linked "plutocracy" and "communism" in a way Taylor would have understood, and spat the word "privilege" with his special vehemence. They regarded huge cities not as "metropolitan and unprejudiced" but as "sores on the body politic." They were

⁹¹ Quoted in Farish, *Circuit Rider Dismounts*, 334.

unimpressed by the splendors of the "new equality": "the regal luxury of a Vanderbilt, in his gaudy palace, beside the hireling laborer in his sordid tenement-lodging, who is his theoretical EQUAL!" Nor did they fancy the new "free enterprise": "Capital is collected in commanding masses, at whose bidding the free-holding citizen is sunk into the multitudinous hireling proletariat." Nor the "free press": "Its sheets come up, like the frogs of Egypt, into our houses, our bed chambers, our very kneading troughs . . . a deluge of perversions . . . the creatures of money." As for the great twin gods Mass and Speed, they were really demons in disguise, and would end by swallowing their foolish worshipers. These gentry were, in short, more old-fashioned than the Lost Cause itself: they were not only incorrigibly "unprogressive," they were "reactionary," and Walter Hines Page would have pronounced them "mummies" without a moment's hesitation.⁹²

In his address "The New South," Robert L. Dabney, Stonewall Jackson's chief of staff and biographer, warned against the "special temptations to which a subjugated people are exposed while passing of necessity under a new and conquering system," particularly the temptation "to become like your conquerors." He said: "I hear our young men quote to each other the advice of the wily diplomat Gortschacoff to the beaten French: 'Be strong.' They exclaim: Let us develop! develop! develop! Let us have like our conquerors, great cities, great capitalists, great factories and commerce and great populations; then we shall cope with them. . . . To exclaim as so many do of factories, and mines, and banks, and stock boards, and horse-powers of steam, and patent machines, 'These be thy gods, O Israel!' This would be a deadly mistake."

Never, of course, was there the remotest chance of Dabney's goose quill prevailing against the clattering presses of Grady and Dawson, Tompkins and Edmonds. Anyway, the New South had no ear for pessimism—not with Georgia boasting eleven millionaires in 1892, and Kentucky twenty-four, and New Orleans alone thirty-

⁹² Robert L. Dabney, *The New South, A Discourse* . . . (Raleigh, 1883), *passim*; Charles C. Jones, Jr., *The Old South, Addresses Delivered before the Confederate Survivors Association* (Augusta, Ga., 1887), *passim*; John Donald Wade, "Old Wine in a New Bottle," in *Virginia Quarterly Review* (University, Va.), XI (1935), 239-52.

five!⁹⁸ Not with Edmonds proclaiming that throughout "the real South"—the urbanized, capitalistic South—could be heard "a continuous and unbroken strain of what has been termed 'the music of progress—the whirr of the spindle, the buzz of the saw, the roar of the furnace and the throb of the locomotive.'" Not until the New South was confronted by the Populists did it meet with a challenge that set it back on its heels for a spell.

⁹⁸ Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana*, 291 and note.

IDA M. TARBELL

ALTHOUGH THE IMPORTANCE of an intimate knowledge of past business activities is now recognized by scholars, the lack of accurate and detailed analyses of representative corporations remains a serious obstacle to a proper understanding of American history as a whole. The absence of such studies is a special handicap for anyone concerned with the formative years after the Civil War when the national economy began to take on its modern industrial form. No other period illustrates so well the characteristics of free enterprise and of a government dominated by the wishes of business leaders. To attempt to write a history of this era without understanding the problems which business encountered and its attitude toward them is as futile as to explain the American Revolution without reference to British mercantilism.

Yet the historians who were contemporaries of Vanderbilt, Rockefeller, and Carnegie did not consider it their duty to record industrial developments. Their interest was in politics, and even political history was isolated in its own vacuum. Before professional historians rid themselves of this limited conception, business history had entered the field of scholarship through a side door opened by crusading journalists such as Ida M. Tarbell. Even though Miss Tarbell hoped that her work would be judged as a serious historical study, it should not have surprised her that when *The History of the Standard Oil Company* was published, in 1904, it was immediately identified with the muckraking movement which had arisen in the periodical literature of the time. Not only was Ida Tarbell associated on the staff

of *McClure's Magazine* with such reformers as Ray Stannard Baker and Lincoln Steffens; she also shared their social ideals and their purpose of exposing corporate and trust malpractices.

Although Miss Tarbell's assumption of the Standard Oil Company's guilt interfered with her investigation and helped to predetermine her ultimate conclusions, her methods of research were more like those of the scholar than of the journalist. The numerous inquiries conducted by state and federal governments into the affairs of the company and the lawsuits to which it had been a party had created a considerable body of documentary evidence, a good deal of which consisted of transcripts of testimony taken under oath. Miss Tarbell devoted many months to examining these scattered documents. Then, much to her surprise and pleasure, she found that an official of the Standard Oil Company, Henry Rogers, was interested in her work and eager to have the company represented in the best possible light. After making clear her intention to paint as dark a picture as the facts indicated, Miss Tarbell engaged in repeated conversations with Rogers for more than two years. Each important point was argued by the two, and material in the company's files was made available for Miss Tarbell's inspection. Her first article on the Standard Oil Company was not published until a year after she had made Rogers' acquaintance.

Although Miss Tarbell did devote space to the company's constructive achievements, her conclusions were not substantially different from those reached a few years earlier by Henry Demarest Lloyd in his *Wealth Against Commonwealth*. She believed that Rockefeller's genius for efficient organization and his insistence upon service to the customer were more than offset by the destruction of morals and men caused by his ruthless methods of achieving monopoly and exploiting control over the market. Disclaiming any intention to criticize mere size, she condemned the Standard Oil Company because of its practices and as an example of the fact that trusts did not conduct business according to the rules of fair play.

Her judgment was thus essentially ethical rather than economic. Her censure was concentrated not on what big business was doing but on the way it was doing it. Her point of departure was an assumption of what the proper rules of business should be rather than an analysis of the conditions which produced the practices she condemned. If she could not be expected to devote much time to the general business setting, she causes legitimate surprise with her failure to give adequate attention to the oil industry itself. Her initial chapter, dealing with conditions in western Pennsylvania before Rockefeller's company entered the scene, strikes the note of eulogistic praise for the constructive achievements of the independent producers rather than of concern for the chaos and confusion which provided the Standard Oil Company with its opportunity for exploitation. This idealization of small business leads her, perhaps unintentionally, to represent Rockefeller's enterprise as an isolated source of evil and to assign to it a monopoly on unscrupulousness within the oil industry. The most severe of its modern critics would make no such claim for the Standard Oil Company. In brief, a different point of departure might have led Miss Tarbell to the same conclusions but might have given her a more convincing basis for them.

Although Miss Tarbell was aware of the importance of individuals in the history of the Standard Oil Company, her work has been criticized for its neglect of personalities. While this can be explained by the documentary nature of her evidence, it cannot be denied that the deficiency makes the work less readable and the narrative less understandable. Since the author intended to make ethical judgments, the need to know and make known to the reader the men who established policy seems evident. Yet such important figures as Henry Flagler and John D. Archbold flit in and out of the pages before the reader can become acquainted with them; even Rockefeller himself remains a silhouette, a distinct but incomplete man.

Ida Tarbell's history has the strength of a pioneer study writ-

ten while the trusts it wanted to expose were still in full strength. As an indictment of contemporary methods, it may lack the patience of historical scholarship, but its indignation gives it a virility, even an insight, which a mood of calm appraisal cannot reproduce. Further, although Miss Tarbell was trained as a journalist, she helped academic historians to realize the vital role of business history in the study of the American past.

Cutting to Kill

TO KNOW every detail of the oil trade, to be able to reach at any moment its remotest point, to control even its weakest factor—this was John D. Rockefeller's ideal of doing business. It seemed to be an intellectual necessity for him to be able to direct the course of any particular gallon of oil from the moment it gushed from the earth until it went into the lamp of a housewife. There must be nothing—*nothing* in his great machine he did not know to be working right. It was to complete this ideal, to satisfy this necessity, that he undertook, late in the seventies, to organise the oil markets of the world, as he had already organised oil refining and oil transporting. Mr. Rockefeller was driven to this new task of organisation not only by his own curious intellect; he was driven to it by that thing so abhorrent to his mind—competition. If, as he claimed, the oil business belonged to him, and if, as he had announced, he was prepared to refine all the oil that men would consume, it followed as a corollary that the markets of the world belonged to him. In spite of his bold pretensions and his perfect organisation, a few obstinate oil refiners still lived and persisted in

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doing business. They were a fly in his ointment—a stick in his wonderful wheel. He must get them out; otherwise the Great Purpose would be unrealised. And so, while engaged in organising the world's markets, he incidentally carried on a campaign against those who dared intrude there.

When Mr. Rockefeller began to gather the oil markets into his hands he had a task whose field was literally the world, for already, in 1871, the year before he first appeared as an important factor in the oil trade, refined oil was going into every civilised country of the globe. Of the five and a half million barrels of crude oil produced that year, the world used five millions, over three and a half of which went to foreign lands. This was the market which had been built up in the first ten years of business by the men who had developed the oil territory and invented the process of refining and transporting, and this was the market, still further developed, of course, that Mr. Rockefeller inherited when he succeeded in corraling the refining and transporting of oil. It was this market he proceeded to organise.

The process of organisation seems to have been natural and highly intelligent. The entire country was buying refined oil for illumination. Many refiners had their own agents out looking for markets; others sold to wholesale dealers, or jobbers, who placed trade with local dealers, usually grocers. Mr. Rockefeller's business was to replace independent agents and jobbers by his own employees. The United States was mapped out and agents appointed over these great divisions. Thus, a certain portion of the Southwest—including Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas and Texas—the Waters-Pierce Oil Company, of St. Louis, Missouri, had charge of; a portion of the South—including Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi—Chess, Carley and Company, of Louisville, Kentucky, had charge of. These companies in turn divided their territory into sections, and put the subdivisions in the charge of local agents. These local agents had stations where oil was received and stored, and from which they and their salesmen carried on their campaigns. This system, inaugurated in the seventies, has been developed until now the Standard Oil Company of each state has its own marketing department, whose territory is divided and watched over in the above fashion. The entire oil-buying territory of the country is thus covered by local agents re-

porting to division headquarters. These report in turn to the head of the state marketing department, and his reports go to the general marketing headquarters in New York.

To those who know anything of the way in which Mr. Rockefeller does business, it will go without saying that this marketing department was conducted from the start with the greatest efficiency and economy. Its aim was to make every local station as nearly perfect in its service as it could be. The buyer must receive his oil promptly, in good condition, and of the grade he desired. If a customer complained, the case received prompt attention and the cause was found and corrected. He did not only receive oil; he ~~could~~ have proper lamps and wicks and burners, and directions about using them.

The local stations from which the dealer is served to-day are models of their kind, and one can easily believe they have always been so. Oil, even refined, is a difficult thing to handle without much disagreeable odour and stain, but ~~the~~ local stations of the Standard Oil Company, like its refineries, are kept orderly and clean by a rigid system of inspection. Every two or three months an inspector goes through each station and reports to headquarters on a multitude of details—whether barrels are properly bunged, filled, stencilled, painted, glued; whether tank wagons, buckets, faucets, pipes, are leaking; whether the glue trough is clean, the ground around the tanks dry, the locks in good condition; the horses properly cared for; the weeds cut in the yard. The time the agent gets around in the morning and the time he takes for lunch are reported. The prices he pays for feed for his horses, for coal, for repairs, are noted. In fact, the condition of every local station, at any given period, can be accurately known at marketing headquarters, if desired. All of this tends, of course, to the greatest economy and efficiency in the local agents.

But the Standard Oil agents were not sent into a territory back in the seventies simply to sell all the oil they could by efficient service and aggressive pushing; they were sent there to sell all the oil that was bought. "The coal-oil business belongs to us," was Mr. Rockefeller's motto, and from the beginning of his campaign in the markets his agents accepted and acted on that principle. If a dealer bought but a barrel of oil a year, it must be from Mr. Rockefeller. This ambition made it necessary that the agents have accurate

knowledge of all outside transactions in oil, however small, made in their field. How was this possible? The South Improvement scheme provided perfectly for this, for it bound the railroad to send daily to the principal office of the company reports of all oil shipped, the name of shipper, the quantity and kind of oil, the name of consignee, with the destination and the cost of freight.¹ Having such knowledge as this, an agent could immediately locate each shipment of the independent refiner, and take the proper steps to secure the trade. But the South Improvement scheme never went into operation. It remained only as a beautiful ideal, to be worked out as time and opportunity permitted. The exact process by which this was done it is impossible to trace. The work was delicate and involved operations of which it was wise for the operator to say nothing. It is only certain that little by little a secret bureau for securing information was built up until it is a fact that information concerning the business of his competitors, almost as full as that which Mr. Rockefeller hoped to get when he signed the South Improvement Company contracts, is his to-day. Probably the best way to get an idea of how Mr. Rockefeller built up this department, as well as others of his marketing bureau, is to examine it as it stands to-day. First, then, as to the methods of securing information which are in operation.

Naturally and properly the local agents of the Standard Oil Company are watchful of the condition of competition in their districts, and naturally and properly they report what they learn. "We ask our salesmen and our agents to keep their eyes open and keep us informed of the situation in their respective fields," a Standard agent told the Industrial Commission in 1898. "We ask our agents, as they visit the trade, to make reports to us of whom the different parties are buying; principally to know whether our agents are attending to their business or not. If they are letting too much business get away

¹ The Eighth Section of Article Second of this contract, defining the duties of the railroads reads: "To make manifests or way-bills of all petroleum or its products transported over any portion of the railroads of the party of the second part or its connections, which manifests shall state the name of the consignor, the place of shipment, the kind and actual quantity of the article shipped, the name of the consignee, and the place of destination, with the rate and gross amount of freight and charges, and to send daily to the principal office of the party of the first part duplicates of all such manifests or way-bills."—Proceedings in Relation to Trusts, House of Representatives, 1888. Report Number 3,112, page 360.

agents would have been allowed to examine the incoming cars, note the consignor, contents and consignee. It did not appear in the examination, however, that anybody but Mr. Page had sent agents to do such a thing. The Waters-Pierce Oil Company, of St. Louis, once paid one of its Texas agents this unique compliment: "We are glad to know you are on such good terms with the railroad people that Mr. Clem (an agent handling independent oil) gains nothing by marking his shipments by numbers instead of names." In the same letter the writer said: "Would be glad to have you advise us when Clem's first two tanks have been emptied and returned, also the second two to which you refer as having been in the yard nine and sixteen days, that we may know how long they have been held in Dallas. The movement of tank cars enters into the cost of oil, so it is necessary to have this information that we may know what we are competing with."³

The superior receiving the filled blanks carefully follows them by letters of instructions and inquiries, himself keeping track of each dealer, however insignificant, in the local agent's territory, and when one out of line has been brought in, never failing to compliment his subordinate. But however diligent the agent may be in keeping his eyes open, however he may be stirred to activity by the prodding and compliments of his superiors, it is of course out of the question that he get anything like the full information the South Improvement scheme insured. What he is able to do is supplemented by a system which compares very favourably with that famous scheme and which undoubtedly was suggested by it. For many years independent refiners have declared that the details of their shipments were leaking regularly from their own employees or from clerks in freight offices. At every investigation made these declarations have been repeated and occasional proof has been offered; for instance, a Cleveland refiner, John Teagle, testified in 1888 to the Congressional Committee that one day in 1883 his bookkeeper came to him and told him that he had been approached by a brother of the secretary of the Standard Oil Company at Cleveland, who had asked him if he did not wish to make some money. The bookkeeper asked how, and after some talk he was informed that it would be by his giving information concerning the business of his firm to the Standard.

³ Trust Investigation of Ohio Senate, 1898, page 370.

The bookkeeper seems to have been a wary fellow, for he dismissed his interlocutor without arousing suspicion and then took the case to Mr. Teagle, who asked him to make some kind of an arrangement in order to find out just what information the Standard wanted. The man did this. For twenty-five dollars down and a small sum per year he was to make a transcript of Mr. Teagle's daily shipments with net price received for the same; he was to tell what the cost of manufacturing in the refinery was; the amount of gasoline and naphtha made and the net price received for them; what was done with the tar; and what percentage of different grades of oil was made; also how much oil was exported. This information was to be mailed regularly to Box 164 of the Cleveland post-office. Mr. Teagle, who at that moment was hot on the tracks of the Standard in the courts, got an affidavit from the bookkeeper. This he took with the money which the clerk had received to the secretary of the Standard Oil Company and charged him with bribery. At first the gentleman denied having any knowledge of the matter, but he finally confessed and even took back the money. Mr. Teagle then gave the whole story to the newspapers, where it of course made much noise.

Several gentlemen testified before the recent Industrial Commission to the belief that their business was under the constant espionage of the Standard Oil Company. Theodore Westgate, an oil refiner of Titusville, told the Commission that all of his shipments were watched. The inference from his testimony was that the Standard Oil Company received reports direct from the freight houses. Lewis Emery, Jr., of Bradford, a lifelong contestant of the Standard, declared that he knew his business was followed now in the same way as it was in 1872 under the South Improvement Company contract. He gave one or two instances from his own business experience to justify his statements, and he added that he could give many others if necessary. Mr. Gall, of Montreal, Canada, declared that these same methods were in operation in Canada. "When our tank-cars come in," Mr. Gall told the Commission, "the Standard Oil Company have a habit of sending their men, opening a tank-car, and taking a sample out to see what it contains." Mr. Gall declared that he knew this a long time before he was able to get proof of it. He declared that they knew the number of cars that he shipped and the place to which they went, and that it was their habit to send sales-

men after every shipment. Mrs. G. C. Butts, a daughter of George Rice, an independent refiner of Marietta, Ohio, told the Ohio Senate Committee which investigated trusts in 1898 that a railroad agent of their town had notified them that he had been approached by a Standard representative who asked him for a full report of all independent shipments, to whom and where going. The agent refused, but, said Mrs. Butts: "We found out later that someone was giving them this information and that it was being given right from our own works. . . . A party writing us from the Waters-Pierce office wrote that we had no idea of the network of detectives, generally railroad agents, that his company kept, and that everything that we or our agents said or did was reported back to the managers through a regular network of detectives who were agents of the railroads and oil company as well."

But while the proofs the independents have offered of their charges show that such leaks have occurred at intervals all over the country, they do not show anything like a regular system of collecting information through this channel. From the evidence one would be justified in believing that the cases were rare, occurring only when a not over-nice Standard manager got into hot competition with a rival and prevailed upon a freight agent to give him information to help in his fight. In 1903, however, the writer came into possession of a large mass of documents of unquestionable authenticity, bearing out all and more than the independents charge. They show that the Standard Oil Company receives regularly to-day, at least from the railroads and steamship lines represented in these papers, information of all oil shipped. A study of these papers shows beyond question that somebody having access to the books of the freight offices records regularly each oil shipment passing the office—the names of consignor and consignee, the addresses of each, and the quantity and kind of oil are given in each case. This record is made out usually on a sheet of blank paper, though occasionally the recorder has been indiscreet enough to use the railroad company's stationery. The reports are evidently intended not to be signed, though there are cases in the documents where the name of the sender has been signed and erased; in one case a printed head bearing the name of the freight agent had been used. The name had been cut out, but so carelessly that it was easy to identify him. These reports had evi-

dently been sent to the office of the Standard Oil Company, where they had received a careful examination, and the information they contained had been classified. Wherever the shipment entered was from one of the distributing stations of the Standard Oil Company, a line was drawn through it, or it was checked off in some way. In every other case in the mass of reports there was written, opposite the name of the consignee, the name of a person *known* to be a Standard agent or salesman in the territory where the shipment had gone.

Now what is this for? Copies of letters and telegrams accompanying the reports show that as soon as a particular report had reached Standard headquarters and it was known that a carload, or even a barrel, of independent oil was on its way to a dealer, the Standard agent whose name was written after the shipment on the record had been notified. "If you can stop car going to X, authorise rebate to Z (name of dealer) of three-quarters cent per gallon," one of the telegrams reads. There is plenty of evidence to show how an agent receiving such information "stops" the oil. He *persuades* the dealer to countermand the order. George Rice, when before the House Committee on Manufactures in 1888, presented a number of telegrams as samples of his experience in having orders countermanded in Texas. Four of these were sent on the same day from different dealers in the same town, San Angelo. Mr. Rice investigated the cause, and, by letters from the various firms, learned that the Standard agent had been around "threatening the trade that if they bought of me they would not sell them any more," as he put it.

Mrs. Butts in her testimony in 1898 said that her firm had a customer in New Orleans to whom they had been selling from 500 to 1,000 barrels a month, and that the Standard representative made a contract with him to pay him \$10,000 a year for five years to stop handling the independent oil and take Standard oil! Mrs. Butts offered as evidence of a similar transaction in Texas the following letter:

"LOCKHART, TEXAS, November 30, 1894.

"Mr. Keenan, who is with the Waters-Pierce people at Galveston, has made us several visits and made us propositions of all kinds to get us out of the business. Among others, he offered to pay us a monthly salary if we would quit selling oil and let them have full control of

the trade, and insisted that we name a figure that we would take and get out of the business, and also threatened that if we did not accept his proposition they would cut prices below what oil cost us and force us out of business. We asked him the question, should we accept his proposition, would they continue to sell oil as cheap as we were then selling it, and he stated most positively that they would advance the price at once should they succeed in destroying competition.

"J. S. LEWIS AND COMPANY."

In the Ohio Investigation of 1898 John Teagle, of Cleveland, being upon his oath, said that his firm had had great difficulty in getting goods accepted because the Standard agents would persuade the dealers to cancel the orders. "They would have their local man, or some other man, call upon the trade and use their influence and talk lower prices, or make a lower retail price, or something to convince them that they'd better not take our oil, and, I suppose, to buy theirs." Mr. Teagle presented the following letter, signed by a Standard representative, explaining such a countermand:

"DES MOINES, IOWA, January 14, 1891.

"JOHN FOWLER,

Hampton, Iowa.

"Dear Sir:—Our Marshalltown manager, Mr. Ruth, has explained the circumstances regarding the purchase and subsequent countermand of a car of oil from our competitors. He desires to have us express to you our promise that we will stand all expense provided there should be any trouble growing out of the countermand of this car. We cheerfully promise to do this; we have the best legal advice which can be obtained in Iowa, bearing on the points in this case. An order can be countermanded either before or after the goods have been shipped, and, in fact, can be countermanded even if the goods have already arrived and are at the depot. A firm is absolutely obliged to accept a countermand. The fact that the order has been signed does not make any difference. We want you to absolutely refuse, under any circumstances, to accept the car of oil. We are standing back of you in this matter, and will protect you in every way, and would kindly ask you to keep this letter strictly confidential. . . .

"Yours truly,

E. P. PRATT."

Peter Shull, of the Independent Oil Company of Mansfield, Ohio, testified before the same committee to experiences similar to those of Mr. Teagle.

"If I put a man on the road to sell goods for me," said Mr. Shull,

"and he takes orders to the amount of 200 to 300 barrels a week, before I am able to ship these goods possibly, the Standard Oil Company has gone there and compelled those people to countermand those orders under a threat that, if they don't countermand them, they will put the price of oil down to such a price that they cannot afford to handle the goods."

In support of his assertion Mr. Shull offered letters from firms he has been dealing with. The following citations show the character of them:

"TIFFIN, OHIO, February 1, 1898.

"INDEPENDENT OIL COMPANY,
Mansfield, Ohio.

"*Dear Sirs:*—The Standard Oil Company, after your man was here, had the cheek to come in and ask how many barrels of oil we bought and so forth, then asked us to countermand the order, saying it would be for our best; we understand they have put their oil in our next door and offer it at six cents per gallon, at retail. Shall we turn tail or show them fight? If so, will you help us out any? . . .

"Yours truly,

"TALBOTT AND SON."

"TIFFIN, OHIO, January 24, 1898.

"INDEPENDENT OIL COMPANY.

"*Dear Sirs:* . . . I am sorry to say that a Standard Oil man from your city followed that oil car and oil to my place, and told me that he would not let me make a dollar on that oil, and was dogging me around for two days to buy that oil, and made all kinds of threats and talked to my people of the house while I was out, and persuaded me to sell, and I was in a stew what I should do, but I yielded and I have been very sorry for it since. I thought I would hate to see the bottom knocked out of the prices, but that is why I did it—the only reason. The oil was all right. I now see the mistake, and that is of getting a carload—two carloads coming in here inside of a week is more than the other company will stand. . . .

"Yours truly,

"H. A. EIRICK."

In case the agent cannot persuade the dealer to countermand his order, more strenuous measures are applied. The letters quoted above hint at what they will be. Many letters have been presented by witnesses under oath in various investigations showing that Standard Oil agents in all parts of the country have found it necessary for the last twenty-five years to act at times as these letters threaten. One

of the most aggressive of these campaigns waged at the beginning of this war of exterminating independent dealers was by the Standard marketing agent at Louisville, Kentucky—Chess, Carley and Company. This concern claimed a large section of the South as its territory. George Rice, of Marietta, Ohio, had been in this field for eight or ten years, having many regular customers. It became Chess, Carley and Company's business to secure these customers and to prevent his getting others. Mr. Rice was handicapped to begin with by railroad discrimination. He was never able to secure the rates of his big rival on any of the Southern roads. In 1888 the Interstate Commerce Commission examined his complaints against eight different Southern and Western roads, and found that no one of them treated him with "relative justice." Railroad discriminations were not sufficient to drive him out of the Southwest, however, and a war of prices was begun. According to the letters Mr. Rice himself has presented he certainly in some cases began the cutting, as he could well afford to do. For instance, Chess, Carley and Company were selling water-white oil in September, 1880, in Clarksville, Tennessee, at twenty-one cents a gallon delivered in carloads—export oil was selling in barrels in New York at that date at 10 $\frac{5}{8}$ cents a gallon. Rice's agent offered at eighteen cents. The dealer to whom he made the offer, Armstrong by name, wished to accept, but as he had been buying of Chess, Carley and Company, went first to see them about the matter. He came back "scared almost out of his boots," wrote the agent to Rice.

"Carley told him he would break him up if he bought oil of anyone else; that the Standard Company had authorised him to spend \$10,000 to break up any concern that bought oil from anyone else; that he (Carley) would put all his drummers in the field to hunt up Armstrong's customers and sell his customers groceries at five per cent. below Armstrong's prices, and turn all Armstrong's trade over to Moore, Bremaker and Company, and settle with Moore, Bremaker and Company for their losses in helping to break Armstrong up, every thirty days.

"That if Armstrong sent any other oil to Clarksville, Tennessee, he (Carley) would put the price of oil so low in Clarksville as to make the party lose heavily, and that they (the Standard) would break up anyone that would sell him (Armstrong) oil, and that he (Carley) had told Stege and Reiling the same thing. Did you ever? What do you think of that?"

Very soon after this, Chess, Carley and Company took in hand a Nashville firm, Wilkinson and Company, which was buying of Rice. "It is with great reluctance," they wrote, "that we undertake serious competition with any one, and certainly this competition will not be confined to coal-oil or any one article, and will not be limited to any one year. We always stand ready to make reasonable arrangements



J. M. Culp &
Sons

Dear Sir:

Wilkinson & Co
Nashville received
Car of oil Monday
13th - 70 bbls. which
we suspect slipped
thru on the usual
5th class rate - in fact
we might say we know
it did - paying only
\$41.50 freight from here.
Chgs \$5.40 Please
turn another screw
Yours truly
J. M. Culp & Sons
June 16/87

with any one who chooses to appear in our line of business, and it will be unlike anything we have done heretofore if we permit any one to force us into an arrangement which is not reasonable. Any loss, however great, is better to us than a record of this kind." And four days later they wrote: "If you continue to bring on the oil, it will simply force us to cut down our price, and no other course is left to us but the one we have intimated." Wilkinson and Company seem to have stuck to Rice's oil, for, sixteen months later, we find

Chess, Carley and Company calling on the agent of a railroad, which already was giving the Standard discriminating rates, to help in the fight.

The screw was turned, Mr. Rice affirms, his rate being raised fifty per cent. in five days.

Rice carried on his fight for a market in the most aggressive way, and everywhere he met disastrous competition. In 1892 he published a large pamphlet of documents illustrating Standard methods, in which he included citations from some seventy letters from dealers in Texas, received by him between 1881 and 1889, showing the kind of competition his oil met there from the Waters-Pierce Oil Company, the Standard's Texas agents. A dozen sentences, from as many different towns, will show the character of them all:

"I have had wonderful competition on this car. As soon as my car arrived the Waters-Pierce Oil Company, who has an agent here, slapped the price down to \$1.80 per case 110."

"... Oil was selling at this point for \$2.50 per case, and as soon as your car arrived it was put down to \$1.50, which it is selling at to-day."

"The Waters-Pierce Oil Company reduced their prices on Brilliant oil from \$2.60 to \$1.50 per case and is waging a fierce war."

"Waters-Pierce Oil Company has our state by the throat and we would like to be extricated."

"I would like to handle your oil if I could be protected against the Waters-Pierce Oil Company. I am afraid if I would buy a car of oil from you this company would put the oil way below what I pay and make me lose big money. I can handle your oil in large quantities if you would protect me against them."

"The Waters-Pierce Oil Company has cut the stuffing out of coal-oil and have been ever since I got in my last car. They put the price to the merchants at \$1.80 per case."

"We have your quotations on oil. While they are much lower than what we pay, yet unless a carload could be engaged it would pay no firm to try and handle, as Waters-Pierce Oil Company would cut below cost on same."

"The day your oil arrived here, their agent went to all my customers and offered their Eupion oil at ten cents per gallon in barrels and \$1.50 per case, and lower grades in proportion, and told them if they did not refuse to take the oil he would not sell them any more at any

price, and that he was going to run me out of the business, and then they would be at his mercy."

"Now we think Waters-Pierce Oil Company have been getting too high a price for their oil. They are able and do furnish almost this entire state with oil. They cut prices to such an extent when any other oil is offered in this state that they force the parties handling the oil to abandon the trade."

"Trace and hurry up car of oil shipped by you. We learn it is possible that your oil is side-tracked on the line, that Waters-Pierce might get in their work."

"If we were to buy a car or more, the Waters-Pierce Oil Company would manage to sell a little cheaper than we could, and continue doing so until they busted me up."

"In regard to oil, we are about out now, and Waters-Pierce have put their oil up again and quote us at the old price."

"Jobbers say when they take hold of another oil they are at once boycotted by Waters-Pierce Oil Company, who not only refuse to sell them, but put oil below what they pay for it, and thus knock them out of the oil trade, unless they sell at a loss."

"If I find I can handle your oil in Texas without being run out and losing money by this infernal corporation, the Waters-Pierce Oil Company, I want to arrange with you to handle it extensively. I received verbal notice this morning from their agent that they would make it hot for me when my oil got here."

Mr. Rice claims, in his preface to the collection of letters here quoted from, that he has hundreds of similar ones from different states in the Union, and the writer asked to examine them. The package of documents submitted in reply to this request was made up literally of hundreds of letters. They came from twelve different states, and show everywhere the same competitive method—cutting to kill. One thing very noticeable in these letters is the indignation of the dealers at the Standard methods of securing trade. They resent threats. They complain that the Standard agents "nose" about their premises, that they ask impudent questions, and that they generally make the trade disgusting and humiliating. In Mississippi, in the eighties, the indignation of the small dealers against Chess, Carley and Company was so strong that they formed associations binding themselves not to deal with them.

These same tactics have been kept up in the Southwest ever since. A letter, dated April 28, 1891, from the vice-president of the Waters-Pierce Oil Company, A. M. Finlay, to his agent at Dallas, Texas, says bluntly: "We want to make the prices at Dallas and in the neighbourhood on Brilliant and water-white oil, that will prevent Clem (an independent dealer) from doing any business." And Mr. Finlay adds: "Hope you will make it a point to be present at the next meeting of the city council, to-morrow night, and do everything possible to prevent granting a permit to build within the city limits, unless building similar to ours is constructed, for it would not be fair to us to allow someone else to put up constructions for the storage of oil, when they had compelled us to put up such an expensive building as we have."⁴

Mr. Rice is not the only independent oil dealer who has produced similar testimony. Mr. Teagle and Mr. Shull, in Ohio, have furnished considerable. "The reason we quit taking your oil is this," wrote a Kansas dealer to Scofield, Shurmer and Teagle, in 1896: "The Standard Oil Company notified us that if we continued handling your oil they would cut the oil to ten cents retail, and that we could not afford to do, and for that reason we are forced to take their oil or do business for nothing or at a loss." "The Standard agent has repeatedly told me that if I continued buying oil and gasoline from your wagon," wrote an Ohio dealer to the same firm in 1897, "they would have it retailed here for less than I could buy. I paid no attention to him, but yesterday their agent was here and asked me decidedly if I would continue buying oil and gasoline from your wagon. I told him I would do so; then he went and made arrangements with the dealers that handle their oil and gasoline to retail it for seven cents."

Mr. Shull summed up his testimony before the same committee to which Mr. Teagle gave the above, by declaring: "You take \$10,000 and go into the business and I will guarantee you won't be in business ninety days. Their motto is that anybody going into the oil business in opposition to them they will make life a burden to him. That is about as near as you can get to it."

Considerable testimony of the same sort of practices was offered in the recent "hearing before the Industrial Commission," most of

⁴ Trust Investigation of Ohio Senate, 1898, page 370.

it general in character. The most significant special case was offered by Mr. Westgate, the treasurer of the American Oil Works, an independent refinery of Titusville, Pennsylvania.

The American Oil Works, it seems, were in 1894 shipping oil called "Sunlight" in barrels to South Bend, Washington. This was in the territory of the Standard agents at Portland, Oregon, one of whom wrote to a South Bend dealer when he heard of the intrusion: "We will state for your information that never a drop of oil has reached South Bend of better quality than what we have always shipped into that territory. They can name it 'Sunlight,' 'Moonlight,' or 'Starlight,' it makes no difference. You can rest assured if another carload of 'Sunlight' arrives at your place, it will be sold very cheap. We do not purpose to allow another carload to come into that territory unless it comes and is put on the market at one-half its actual cost. You can convey this idea to the young man who imported the carload of 'Sunlight' oil."

When John D. Archbold, of the Standard Oil Company, had his attention called to this letter by Professor Jenks, of the Industrial Commission, Mr. Archbold characterised the letter as "a foolish statement by a foolish and unwise man" and promised to investigate it. Later he presented the commission with an explanation from the superior of the agent, who declared that the writer of the letter did not have any authority to say that oil would be sold on the basis mentioned. "The letter," he continued, "was intended to be written in a jocular manner to deny a claim that he was selling oil inferior in quality to that sold by others." It is hard for the mere outsider to catch the jocularly of the letter, and it must have been much more difficult for the dealer who received it to appreciate it.

Independent oil dealers of the present day complain bitterly of a rather novel way employed by the Standard for bringing into line dealers whose prejudices against buying from them are too strong to be overcome by the above methods. This is through what are called "bogus" oil companies. The obdurate dealer is approached by the agent of a new independent concern, call it the A B C Oil Company, for illustration. The agent seeks trade on the ground that he represents an independent concern and that he can sell at lower prices than the firm from which the dealer is buying. Gradually he works his way into the independent's trade. As a matter of fact, the new company is merely a Standard jobbing house which makes no oil,

and which conceals its real identity under a misleading name. The mass of reports from railroad freight offices quoted from in this article corroborate this claim of the independents. The A B C Oil Company is mentioned again and again as shipping oil, and in the audited reports it is always checked off in the same fashion as the known Standard companies, and none of its shipments is referred to Standard agents. Independents all over the country tell of loss of markets through underselling by these "bogus" companies. The lower price which a supposedly independent concern gives to a dealer who will not, under any condition, buy of the Standard, need not demoralise the Standard trade in the vicinity if the concession is made with caution. After the trade is secure, that is, after the genuine independent is ousted, the masquerading concern always finds itself obliged to advance prices. When the true identity of such a company becomes known its usefulness naturally is impaired, and it withdraws from the field and a new one takes its place.

There is never a dealer in oil too small to have applied the above methods of competition. In recent years they have frequently been applied even to oil peddlers. In a good many towns of the country oil is sold from door to door by men whose whole stock in trade is their peddling wagons. Many of these oil peddlers build up a good trade. As a rule they sell Standard oil. Let one take independent oil, however, and the case is at once reported. His customers are located and at once approached by a Standard tank wagon man, who frequently, it is said, not only sells at a lower price than they have been paying, but even goes so far as to clean and fill the lamps! In these raids on peddlers of independent oil, refined oil has been sold in different cities at the doors of consumers at less than crude oil was bringing at the wells, and several cents per gallon less than it was selling to wholesale dealers in refined. It is claimed by independents that at the present time the "bogus" companies generally manage this matter of driving out peddlers, thus saving the Standard the unpopularity of the act and the dissatisfaction of the rise in price which, of course, follows as soon as the trade is secured.

The general explanation of these competitive methods which the Standard officials have offered is that they originate with "over-zealous" employees and are disapproved of promptly if brought to the attention of the heads of the house. The cases seem rather too universal for such an explanation to be entirely satisfactory. Cer-

tainly the system of collecting information concerning competitive business is not practised by the exceptional "over-zealous" employee, but is a recognised department of the Standard Oil Company's business. In the mass of documents from which the reports of oil shipments referred to above were drawn, are certain papers showing that the system is nearly enough universal to call for elaborate and expensive bookkeeping at the headquarters of each Standard marketing division. For instance, below is a fragment illustrating the page of a book kept at such a headquarters.

Competing Oil Receipts.						Youngville	Territory					
Bills Receipts	Date Ship'd	Date Rec'd	SHIPPER	FROM	CONSIGNEE	DESTINATION	Refined Barrels	Naphtha Barrels	Lub'ing Barrels	CAR		REMARKS
										Initial	No.	
5/20	5/16	✓	Penn. Mfg. Co.	Oil City	L. M. O Co	Youngville		93		L. M.	7741	
5/22	5/16		16b Wanna L. & A. Co.	Stratford	G. Spencer Co	"		76		P. L. M.	432	
5/7	5/2		7 Capital Oil Co.	Oil City	Hansbrough Oil Co	"	64		12	S. K.	1684	
5/12	5/6		9 Clear Lake Oil Co.	St. Joseph	X. Y. Z. Oil Co	"	112			X. M.	43	
			Empire Oil & Mfg. Co.	New	Arden Prod Co	"	63			P. L. M.	64328	
5/17	5/3		28 Wanna L. & A. Co.	Stratford	"	"		87		S. K.	13748	
5/17	4/1		4 Tenn. Ref. Co.	Clarendon	"	"	75			S. M.	66042	
5/17	5/20		30 Wanna L. & A. Co.	Stratford	L. M. O. Co.	"		92		B. O.	37421	
5/11	5/22		21 Pittsburg Ref. Co.	Croftville	Young Mfg. Co.	"		92		"	94	
5/11	5/7		71 Young Oil Co.	Broadford	X. Y. Z. Oil Co	"		122		S. K.	496	
5/11	5/26		26 Empire Oil Co.	Tennille	"	"		126		P. L. M.	643	

The figures, dates, consignees and destination on the above are fictitious. The names of shippers were copied from the original in possession of the writer.

What does this show? Simply that every day the reports received from railroad freight agents are entered in records kept for the purpose; that there is on file at the standard Oil headquarters a detailed list of the daily shipments which each independent refiner sends out, even to the initials and number on the car in which the shipment goes. From this remarkable record the same set of documents shows that at least two sets of reports are made up. One is a report of the annual volume of business being done by each particular independent refiner or wholesale jobber, the other of the business of each individual local dealer, so far as the detectives of the Standard have been able to locate it. For instance, among the documents is the report on a well-known oil jobbing house in one of the big cities of the country—reproduced on the next page.

CUTTING TO KILL

643

Statement showing Receipts and Deliveries for December

	<u>Barrels</u>		1901 Gasoline	1902
	1901 Coal	1902 Oil		
Total Receipts of Competitor	3540	5070	1102	2214
Less shipments <u>not in</u> our District	420	1849	198	562
Net Shipments <u>in</u> our District	3120	3221	904	1652

	Oil	Old Places	New Car Places	Less Load	Car Load		
Territory covered by Competitor	}	2140	2140	927	3067	3217	361
		2412	63	2475	742		
	Gasol.)			361			361
			1051	411			1462
Balance					53	4	543 192
Not accounted for							211 87
					53	4	332 103

	<u>For Year</u>		1901 Gasoline	1902
	1901 Coal	1902 Oil		
Receipts	23787	26742	8764	13141
Less Shipments <u>not in</u> our territory	1410	1921	1262	2167
	22377	24821	7502	10974

	Oil	Old Places	New Car Places	Less Load	Car Load		
Territory covered by competitor	}	8146	1179	9325	6127	15452	11307
		9691	487	10178	1129		
	Gasol.)			678			678
		729	11	623	849		2212
						6925	13514 6827 8762
Not accounted for						3122	196 2171
						6925	10392 6628 6591

The above is similar to the form compiled by the Standard Oil Company.

A comparison of this report with the firm's own accounts shows that the Standard came within a small per cent. of an accurate estimate of the X Y Z's business.

Another curious use made of these reports from the freight offices is forming a card catalogue of local dealers. (See form below.) Oil is usually sold at retail by grocers. It is with them that the local agents deal. Now the daily reports from the freight offices show the oil they receive. The competition reports from local agents also give more or less information concerning their business. A card is made out for each of them, tabulating the date on which he received oil, the name and location of the dealer he got it from, the quality, and the price he sells at. In a space left for remarks on the card there is

Name E. C. Link Town Georgetown
 P. O. _____ Sh. Pt. _____ Salesman Merrill Nearest Tank Wagon Station _____ Rate _____

Date Shipped	Year	Shipped by	From	No. Bbls.	Kind of Oil	Price	Remarks
5/14	1901	B & Co	Pasadena	2	Refd		
5/19		"	"	3	"		
5/26		"	"	3	"		
6/3		"	"	3	"		
6/10		X.Y. 3. Co	"	3	L. M. N		
6/20		"	"	3	"		
6/26		B. & Co	"	2	Refd		
7/4		X.Y. 3. Co	"	4	L. M. N		
7/16		B & Co	"	3	Refd		

Formerly dealt altogether with X.Y. & Co. - it is hard to mean him away. I saw what precipitated. Opposed to monopolies - I want buy of S.O. Co. Merrill

The names, figures, and locations on the above form are fictitious

The remarks are copied from cards in possession of the writer.

written in red ink any general information about the dealer the agent may have picked up. Often there is an explanation of why the man does not buy Standard oil—not infrequently this explanation reads: "Is opposed to monopolies." It is impossible to say from documentary evidence how long such a card catalogue has been kept by the Standard; that it has been a practice for at least twenty-five years the following quotation from a letter written in 1903 by a prominent Standard official in the Southwest to one of his agents shows: "Where competition exists," says the official, "it has been our custom to keep a record of each merchant's daily purchase of bulk oil; and I know of one town at least in the Southern Texas Division

where that record has been kept, whether there was competition or not, for the past fifteen years.”⁵

The inference from this system of “keeping the eyes open” is that the Standard Oil Company knows practically where every barrel shipped by every independent dealer goes; and where every barrel bought by every corner-grocer from Maine to California comes from. The documents from which the writer draws the inference do not, to be sure, cover the entire country, but they do cover in detail many different states, and enough is known of the Standard’s competitive methods in states outside this territory to justify one in believing that the system of gathering information is in use everywhere. That it is a perfect system is improbable. Bribery is not as dangerous business in this country as it deserves to be—of course nothing but a bribe would induce a clerk to give up such information as these daily reports contain—but, happily, such is the force of tradition that even those who have practised it for a long time shrink from discovery. It is one of those political and business practices which are only respectable when concealed. Naturally, then, the above system of gathering information must be handled with care, and can never have the same perfection as that Mr. Rockefeller expected when he signed the South Improvement Company charter.

The moral effect of this system on employees is even a more serious feature of the case than the injustice it works to competition. For a “consideration” railroad freight clerks give confidential information concerning freight going through their hands. It would certainly be quite as legitimate for post-office clerks to allow Mr. Rockefeller to read the private letters of his competitors, as it is that the clerks of a railroad give him data concerning their shipments. Everybody through whose hands such information passes is contaminated by the knowledge. To be a factor, though even so small a one, in such a transaction, blunts one’s sense of right and fairness. The effect on the local Standard agent cannot but be demoralising. Prodded constantly by letters and telegrams from superiors to secure the countermand of independent oil, confronted by statements of the amount of sales which have gotten away from him, information he knows only too well to have been secured by underhand means, obliged to explain why he cannot get this or that

⁵ Trust Investigation of Ohio Senate, 1898, page 371.

trade away from a rival salesman, he sinks into habits of bullying and wheedling utterly inconsistent with self-respect. "Is there nothing you independents can do to prevent our people finding out who you sell too?" an independent dealer reports a hunted Standard agent asking him. "My life is made miserable by the pressure brought on to chase up your sales. I don't like such business. It isn't right, but what can I do?"

The system results every now and then, naturally enough, in flagrant cases of bribing employees of the independents themselves. Where the freight office does not yield the information, the rival's own office may, and certainly if it is legitimate to get it from one place it is from the other. It is not an unusual thing for independent refiners to discharge a man whom they have reason to believe gives confidential information to the Standard. An outrageous case of this, which occurred some ten years ago, is contained in an affidavit which has been recently put at the writer's disposition. It seems that in 1892 the Lewis Emery Oil Company, an independent selling concern in Philadelphia, employed a man by the name of Buckley. This man was discharged, and in September of that year he went into the employ of the leading Standard refinery of Philadelphia, a concern known as the Atlantic Refining Company. According to the affidavit made by this man Buckley, the managers of the Standard concern, some time in February, 1893, engaged him in conversation about affairs of his late employer. They said that if they could only find out the names of the persons to whom their rival sold, and for what prices, they could soon run him out of business! And they asked Buckley if he could not get the information for them. After some discussion, one of the Standard managers said: "What's the matter with the nigger?" alluding to a coloured boy in the employment of the Lewis Emery concern. Buckley told them that he would try him. "You can tell the nigger," said one of the men, "that he needn't be afraid, because if he loses his position there's a position here for him."

Buckley saw the negro and made a proposition to him. The boy agreed to furnish the information for a price. "Starting from February, 1893," says Mr. Buckley, "and lasting up to about August of the same year, this boy furnished me periodically with the daily shipments of the Lewis Emery concern, which I took and handed

personally, sometimes to one and sometimes to the other manager. They took copies of them, and usually returned the originals." The negro also brought what is known as the price-book to Buckley, and a complete copy of this was made by the Standard managers. "In short," says Mr. Buckley in his affidavit, "I obtained from the negro all the inside facts concerning the Lewis Emery Oil Company's business, and I furnished them all to the Standard managers." In return for this information the negro lad was paid various sums, amounting in all to about ninety dollars. Buckley says that they were charged upon the Standard books to "Special Expenses." The transaction was ended by the discharge of the coloured boy by the Lewis Emery concern.

The dénouement of this case is tragic enough. The concern was finally driven out of business by these and similar tactics, so Mr. Emery and his partner both affirm. The negro was never taken into the Atlantic Refinery, and Buckley soon after lost his position, as he of course richly deserved to. A man who shows himself traitorous, lying, thieving, even for the "good of the oil business," is never kept long in the employment of the Standard Oil Company. It is notorious in the Oil Regions that the people who "sell" to the Standard are never given responsible positions. They may be shifted around to do "dirty work," as the Oil Regions phrase goes, but they are pariahs in the concern. Mr. Rockefeller knows as well as any man ever did the vital necessity of honesty in an organisation, and the Buckleys and negroes who bring him secret intelligence never get anything but money and contempt for their pains.

For the general public, absorbed chiefly in the question, "How does all this affect what we are paying for oil?" the chief point of interest in the marketing contests is that, after they were over, the price of oil has always gone back with a jerk to the point where it was when the cutting began, and not infrequently it has gone higher—the public pays. Several of the letters already quoted in this chapter show the immediate recoil of the market to higher prices with the removal of competition. A table was prepared in 1892 to show the effect of competition on the price of oil in various states of the Union. The results were startling. In California, oil which sold at non-competitive points at 26½ cents a gallon, at competitive points brought 17½ cents. In Denver, Colorado, there was an "Oil War"

on in the spring of 1892, and the same oil which was selling at Montrose and Garrison at twenty-five cents a gallon, in Denver sold at seven cents. This competition finally killed opposition and Denver thereafter paid twenty-five cents. The profits on this price were certainly great enough to call for competition. The same oil which was sold in Colorado in the spring of 1892 at twenty-five cents, sold in New York for exportation at 6.10 cents. Of course the freight rates to Colorado were high, the open rate was said to be nine cents a gallon, but that it cost the Standard Oil Company nine cents a gallon to get its oil there, one would have to have documentary proof to believe, and, even if it did, there was still some ten cents profit on a gallon—five dollars a barrel. In Kansas, at this time, the difference between the price at competitive and non-competitive points was seven cents; in Indiana six cents; in South Carolina four and one-half cents.

In 1897 Scofield, Shurmer and Teagle, of Cleveland, prepared a circular showing the difference between prices at competitive and non-competitive points in Ohio, and sent it out to the trade. According to this circular the public paid from 25 to 33½ per cent. more where there was no competition. The fact that oil is cheaper where there is competition, and also that the public has to pay the cost of the expensive "Oil Wars" which have been carried on so constantly for the last twenty-five years all over the country, is coming to be recognised, especially in the Middle West of this country, by both dealers and communities. There is no question that the attempts of Standard agents to persuade or bully dealers into countermending orders, or giving up an independent with whose oil they are satisfied, meet with much less general success than they once did. It even happens now and then that communities who have had experience with "Oil Wars" will stand by an independent dealer for months at a time, resisting even the temptation to have their lamps cleaned and filled at next to nothing.

Briefly put, then, the conclusion, from a careful examination of the testimony on Standard competitive methods, is this:

The marketing department of the Standard Oil Company is organised to cover the entire country, and aims to sell all the oil sold in each of its divisions. To forestall or meet competition it has organised an elaborate secret service for locating the quantity, quality,

and selling price of independent shipments. Having located an order for independent oil with a dealer, it persuades him, if possible, to countermand the order. If this is impossible, it threatens "predatory competition," that is, to sell at cost or less, until the rival is worn out. If the dealer still is obstinate, it institutes an "Oil War." In late years the cutting and the "Oil Wars" are often intrusted to so-called "bogus" companies, who retire when the real independent is put out of the way. In later years the Standard has been more cautious about beginning underselling than formerly, though if a rival offered oil at a less price than it had been getting—and generally even small refineries can contrive to sell below the non-competitive prices of the Standard—it does not hesitate to consider the lower price a declaration of war and to drop its prices and keep them down until the rival is out of the way. The price then goes back to the former figure or higher. John D. Archbold's testimony before the Industrial Commission in 1898 practically confirms the above conclusion. Mr. Archbold said that the Standard was in the habit of fighting vigorously to hold and advance its trade—even to the extent of holding prices down to cost until the rival gives way—though he declared it to be his opinion that the history of the company's transactions would show that the competitor forces the fight. Mr. Archbold told the commission that he personally believed it was not advisable to sell below cost for the sake of freezing out a smaller rival, save in "greatly aggravated cases," though he admitted the Standard sometimes did it. The trouble is that, accepting Mr. Rockefeller's foundation principle that the oil business belongs to him, any competition is "an aggravated case." All that is reassuring in the situation has come from the obstinate stand of individuals—the refiners who insisted on doing an independent business, on the theory that "this is a free country"; the grocers who resented the prying and bullying of Standard agents, and asserted their right to buy of whom they would; the rare, very rare, community that grasped the fact that oil sold below cost temporarily, meant later paying for the fight. These features of the business belong to the last decade and a half. At the period we have reached in this history—that is, the completion of the monopoly of the pipelines in 1884 and the end of competition in transporting oil—there seemed to the independents no escape from Mr. Rockefeller in the market.

The sureness and promptness with which he located their shipments seemed uncanny to them. The ruthlessness and persistency with which he cut and continued to cut their prices drove them to despair. The character of the competition Mr. Rockefeller carried on in the markets, particularly of the South and Middle West of this country, at this time, aggravated daily the feeble refining element, and bred contempt far and wide among people who saw the cutting, and perhaps profited temporarily by it, but who had neither the power nor the courage to interfere. The knowledge of it fed greatly the bitterness in the Oil Regions. Part of the stock in conversation of every dissatisfied oil producer or ruined refiner became tales of disastrous conflicts in markets. They told of crippled men selling independent oil from a hand cart, whose trade had been wiped out by a Standard cart which followed him day by day, practically giving away oil. They told of grocers driven out of business by an attempt to stand by a refiner. They told endless tales, probably all exaggerated, perhaps some of them false, yet all the them believed, because of such facts as have been rehearsed above. There came to be a popular conviction that the "Standard would do anything." It was a condition which promised endless annoyance to Mr. Rockefeller and his colleagues. It meant popular mistrust, petty hostilities, misinterpretations, contempt, abuse. There were plenty of people even willing to deny Mr. Rockefeller ability. That the Standard was in a venture was enough in those people's minds to damn it. Anything the Standard wanted was wrong, anything they contested was right. A verdict for them demonstrated the corruption of the judge and jury; against them their righteousness. Mr. Rockefeller, indeed, was each year having more reason to realise monopoly building had its trials as well as its profits.

HENRY DAVID

THE TRADITIONAL UNPOPULARITY of radical thought in America has been reflected in the reluctance which historians have shown to describe its occurrence in our national past. Yet without an analysis of radical doctrines, important historical incidents could never be completely understood. This was especially true of the Haymarket Affair, which convulsed the nation in 1886. It remained for Henry David, a half century later, to describe the role of philosophic anarchism in that great upheaval and the reverberations of the doctrine on American society.

The neglect which radical philosophies have experienced at the hands of historical writers has characterized also, but to a lesser degree, the treatment accorded the serious labor turmoils of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It was natural for historians, as for other Americans, to stress national prosperity rather than depression and harmony rather than the domestic strife resulting from economic distress. Yet the passing of time made possible a more objective appraisal, and the broadening of the definition of history permitted an increasing emphasis on sociological subject matter. Modern historians such as David assume that it is their function to explain rather than to glorify the past; they would assert that to gloss over significant circumstances merely because they are unpleasant serves the purposes of neither scholarship nor patriotism.

The History of the Haymarket Affair attempts to achieve several goals. First, it sketches with broad strokes the general position of labor in the industrial expansion following the Civil

War. Whereas other writers have concentrated on the crudity of general business ethics and the ferocious competition which existed in the oil industry or among such railroad buccaneers as Jay Gould and Jim Fiske, David is concerned with the effect which this unrestrained quest for profits had upon the newly created masses of industrial workers. He finds that, while the laborers of the preceding era had both their skills and personal associations with their employers to protect them, the 1880's saw machines substituted for special training and huge impersonal corporations for individual entrepreneurs. Labor had become a commodity—and so cheap a commodity that many who had nothing else to sell lived in desperate poverty.

The major part of David's book is devoted to the immediate circumstances of the Haymarket Affair. The scene is laid in Chicago. Although attention is given to the physical background of suffering and unemployment and to the contemporary agitation for an eight-hour day, what helps to make this book unique is its penetrating analysis of the role played by social-revolutionary doctrines. This analysis includes not only a description of the propaganda circulated in Chicago but also a careful exposition of how the doctrines of anarchism and Marxian socialism were brought to this country and spread among American radicals. To his difficult task, David brought both a wide knowledge and a penetrating insight.

After a brief narrative dealing with the scene in which the bomb was actually thrown, David proceeds to his second major concern, the aftermath of the Haymarket Affair. He finds himself in complete disagreement with such venerable historians as James Ford Rhodes and Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, who approved of the verdict reached in the trial of the anarchist leaders. That these men should have been sentenced to death for murder for no reason other than their advocacy of anarchist doctrines seems to David a travesty on justice. His detailed exposition of the conduct of the trial by a prejudiced judge and a biased jury gives substance to his conclusion that this had been a war on ideas and not an honest search for a just decision.

To give an objective appraisal of so dramatic a series of events constitutes a difficult problem for any historian. Anarchism is hardly a subject to inspire the neutral position for which most historians strive. Yet the kind of sympathy which David has for labor as a whole provided him with the background necessary for rewriting so important an episode in American history. Unless David had fully appreciated the legitimate grievances of labor in this period, it would have been difficult for him to treat seriously this invasion of radical doctrines which became important only because of the large-scale social distress of the times. But the reasons for the success of David's study are less important to the student of history than the study itself, which will continue to enjoy a well-deserved esteem.

The Labor Scene

IN AMERICAN labor history the tumultuous years of the middle 'eighties have long been marked as exceptional. The occurrences that packed the years 1884-1886 constitute what Selig Perlman calls the "great upheaval."¹ They are more deserving of this title than even the convulsive events of 1877 and the bitter struggles of 1893-1894. Norman J. Ware speaks of 1886 as a "revolutionary year,"² and it is significant that in 1887 George E. McNeill³ wrote with insight that the previous twelvemonth

From *The History of the Haymarket Affair*. Copyright 1936, by Henry David, and reprinted by permission of Rinehart & Company, Inc.

¹ John R. Commons and Associates, *History of Labour in the United States*, 2 vols., New York, 1926, vol. 2, title of Chap. IX.

² Norman J. Ware, *The Labor Movement in the United States, 1860-1895. A Study in Democracy*, New York, 1929, p. 302.

³ George E. McNeill, 1836-1906, a respected labor leader of the 'seventies and 'eighties, was active in the eight-hour movement of the 'sixties and played a leading rôle in the establishment of the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics, of which he was deputy chief for several years.

"will be known as the year of the great uprising of labor. The future historian will say: Trades-unions increased their membership and their powers as never before. The Knights of Labor, who had for seventeen years struggled against all adverse influences, added to their membership by tens of thousands weekly. Trades and occupations that had never before been organized joined the . . . assemblies of the order. . . . Laboring men who had heretofore considered themselves as scarcely more than serfs, without rights or privileges, fearing to organize, or failing to do so because of the hopelessness of their condition, seemed imbued with a new spirit. . . . Strikes prevailed everywhere. Thousands of grievances were settled by peaceful arbitration. Every branch of labor was affected. . . . The skilled and the unskilled, the high-paid and the low-paid, all joined hands. . . . The press was filled with labor news."⁴

It is not strange that the decade of the 'eighties should have witnessed a pulsating labor movement accompanied by struggles of a vigor and scope which had hitherto been absent from nineteenth century America. They were the fruit of the sweeping industrialization of the country which characterized the Civil War years and the period following. Though the basis for the Industrial Revolution in America had been laid much earlier, it was not until after 1865 that the implications of the change in industrial technique became fully apparent. Concurrently, new areas in the trans-Mississippi West were being opened to agriculture, while the development of trans-continental railroads and the consolidation of trunk lines served to create a domestic market of national scope.

The half century following the Civil War witnessed the refashioning not only of American industry, but of the whole structure of American society. Manufacturing broke away from its dependence upon commerce. Changes in technology were paralleled by changes in the organization of industry and business enterprise in general. Through the corporate form huge "combinations" came to dominate industrial activity. Immense fortunes, far greater than those of earlier days, were founded. Urban centers were multiplying in number and mounting in population. In them a true industrial proletariat was growing rapidly. The stream of cheap European labor entering the country was becoming wider and creating new problems.

⁴ George E. McNeill, editor, *The Labor Movement, The Problem of To-Day, Comprising a History of Capital and Labor, and Its Present Status*, New York, 1887, pp. 170-171.

The 'eighties themselves were unmistakably marked by a definite quickening in the extension of the factory and machine technique. Not only was there an increase in the number of machines, but they also invaded fields in which they had been relatively absent. Factories and shops in general grew vastly in number, and the amount of capital invested in foundries and machine-shops alone increased two and one-half times in the decade. This, together with the notable increase in the number of patents issued during the 'eighties, offers further evidence of the tendency toward the completer mechanization of production.

This process characterized the whole field of American industry. It was constantly asserted during this period that rapid mechanization was responsible for an over-production of goods which in turn caused industrial depressions. Carroll D. Wright, the first Commissioner of Labor, stated in his annual report of 1886, that manufacturers estimated that in the production of agricultural implements, machines had displaced fully one-half of the "muscular" labor necessary fifteen or twenty years earlier. In the shoe-making and textile industries, there was an equal reduction in the manual labor formerly employed. In the manufacture of small arms, one man with the use of power machinery and with a division of labor "turns out and fits the equivalent of 42 to 50 stocks in ten hours as against 1 stock in the same length of time by manual labor, a displacement of 44 to 49 men in this one operation."

By the 'eighties, striking evidence of the accelerated tempo of industrial life was available. Between 1874 and 1882, the production of Bessemer steel ingots jumped from 191,933 tons to 1,696,450. In Pennsylvania alone, in the ten-year period 1875-1885, it mounted from 148,374 to 1,109,034 tons. In 1884, there were 125,739 miles of railroad in operation, almost a four-fold increase since 1865. The total production of iron and steel rails in 1880, 1,461,847 tons, was more than double that of 1874. In 1860, 14,000,000 tons of coal were mined. In 1884 almost 100,000,000 tons of bituminous and anthracite coal were being extracted from the earth. Regardless of the field, evidences of the phenomenal growth of America industry abound. In Massachusetts, for example, 2,633,075 cases of boots and shoes were manufactured in 1885, compared with the 718,660 cases annually produced two decades earlier. The total value of manufac-

tures estimated at \$1,019,000,000 for 1849, came to \$3,386,000,000 in 1869 and to \$9,372,000,000 twenty years later.

The economic expansion of the two decades after the Civil War was reflected in the growth of international commerce. Exports and imports of the United States, totalling \$687,192,176 in 1860, rose to \$828,730,176 in 1870, and to more than one and a half billion dollars in 1880. Between 1876 and 1885, the country enjoyed an unbroken annual excess of exports over imports. In the twenty year period 1860-1880, the total value of American imports and exports increased at a more rapid rate than that of the British Isles or France.⁵

In 1884, the *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* pointed out that "this country has already a commerce with the countries south of us on the American continent by no means inconsiderable, and not contemptible in comparison with that of England and France. It is quite equal to that of our rivals in point of variety, and, excepting a few great classes of articles like textiles, iron manufactures, boots, hats and clothing, it is also equal in amount." It urged that these markets be further developed for the consumption of American manufactures, and recommended that "Americans . . . establish foreign houses, and place them in charge of active, intelligent and pushing agents." American manufacturing had reached a point where it was imperative to seek foreign markets "not merely with the purpose of disposing of an occasional surplus of goods which temporary over-production or under-consumption leave undisposed of, but for the permanent supply of great populations which are to be clothed and fed and transported from place to place."⁶ These observations clearly indicate that American industry had already outgrown its swaddling clothes.

The changes in industrial technique led to the increase of factory laborers, who in contrast to the handicraft worker, may be regarded

⁵ For the statistical and quoted material in this section on economic development, see *The First Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor, March, 1886. Industrial Depressions*, Washington, 1886, pp. 67-71, 72-73, 80-87; Commons, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 358-359. Excellent textbook treatments of the period of industrialization are Fred Albert Shannon, *Economic History of the People of the United States* New York, 1934, Chaps. XXII-XXIV; Louis M. Hacker and Benjamin B. Kendrick *The United States since 1865*, Revised Edition, New York, 1934, Chap. X.

⁶ Vol. 39, no. 999, August 16, 1884, p. 171.

as semi-skilled or unskilled. Differentiation between employer and employee became more striking, and the dominant conception of the worker as an impersonal commodity became more sharply confirmed. In M. A. Foran's *The Other Side, A Social Study Based on Fact*, published in 1886, a noteworthy though poorly conceived labor novel which is strongly pro-working class, but not opposed to capitalism as such, social cleavage between employers and employees is a constant theme: Antagonistic to radical doctrines, the novel nevertheless presents the average employer of the period just as unfavorably as did the revolutionary of the day, describing him as a domineering "master."⁷

The gulf which separated workingman and employer, either individual or corporate, was produced by the economic changes which the country had experienced. In some occupations it was a comparatively recent development. A brass-worker discussing this question in 1883, remarked: "Well, I remember that fourteen years ago the workmen and foremen and the boss were all as one happy family; it was just as easy and as free to speak to the boss as anyone else, but now the boss is superior, and the men all go to the foremen; but we would not think of looking the foreman in the face now any more than we would the boss. . . . The average hand growing up in the shop now would not think of speaking to the boss, would not presume to recognize him, nor the boss would not recognize him either."⁸ Employers "adopt a superior standpoint," complained another workingman. "The employer has pretty much the same feeling towards the men that he had toward his machinery. He wants to get as much as he can out of his men at the cheapest rate. . . . That is all he cares for the man generally."⁹

⁷ Published in Washington, D. C., and dedicated "To the Working Men and Women of America . . ." It has been overlooked by Parrington and Hicks in their studies of the literature of the period. See especially, pp. 75, 158-159.

⁸ *Report of the [Education and Labor] Committee of the Senate upon the Relations between Labor and Capital, and Testimony Taken by the Committee*, 4 vols., Washington 1885, vol. 1, p. 473 (cited hereafter as *Rep. of the Sen. Com. on Lab.*). Senator Henry W. Blair of New Hampshire was chairman. The resolution as a result of which the Committee was appointed contemplated an inquiry concerning the relations between labor and capital hours and wages of labor, the share of labor and capital in the national income, the causes of strikes, etc. The Report contains a mine of valuable information. A fifth volume containing the report of the Committee was probably suppressed. It never appeared.

⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 681, 682.

One manufacturer bluntly declared, according to Samuel Gompers, "I regard my employés as I do a machine, to be used to my advantage, and when they are old and of no further use I cast them in the street."¹⁰ The indifference to human values here displayed was neither an invention of Gompers nor wholly exceptional. A New England wool-manufacturer, complacently observed that when workers "get starved down to it, then they will go to work at just what you can afford to pay."¹¹ Such views accompanied the conviction that it is, as Jay Gould said, an "axiom . . . that labor is a commodity that will in the long run be governed absolutely by the law of supply and demand,"¹²—an argument which justified adequately the manner in which workers were commonly treated. Labor was a commodity—though sometimes a peculiar and troublesome one—and there was no reason why it should be dealt with differently from other commodities. ". . . I never do my talking to the hands," said a New England mill owner, "I do all my talking with the overseers."¹³

As long as these attitudes were taken by a considerable body of employers, it is no wonder that the feeling between them and the workers was generally one of steadily increasing "distrust and dissatisfaction," as Joseph Medill, publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*, put it.¹⁴ P. J. McGuire, a labor leader, was no less aware of the absence of amicable relations between workers and employers. Their respective activities and wealth—or lack of it—drove a powerful wedge between them. They had no social contacts. "They do not know each other on the street."¹⁵ The more poorly paid workers, observed W. H. Foster, general secretary of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions, in 1883, exhibited an attitude of "sullen discontent" toward those who employed them. "They do not seem to have the courage to express openly what they think all the time, unless they are under the influence of liquor."¹⁶

In pre-Civil War days industry was smaller in scope; less of it was corporately organized; the independent artisan was still an impor-

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 288.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 288.

¹² *New York Times*, April 30, 1886.

¹³ *Rep. of the Sen. Com. on Lab.*, vol. 3, p. 38.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 990.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 357-358.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 410.

tant industrial factor; and escape from working-class ranks was less difficult. The relationship of employer and employee of that period had almost vanished by the 'eighties. As one writer sympathetic to labor observed of the 'eighties and 'nineties, "the old liberality of American employers is on the wane. Competition compels them to be close-fisted and to inaugurate a policy of aggressive resistance against the demands of organized labor."¹⁷ As labor, becoming increasingly conscious of its condition, boldly voiced its complaints and demands, and resorted more widely to industrial action to gain its objectives, capital developed not only the normal defense mechanisms but a definite militancy. In an age dedicated to the business exploitation of the vast resources of America it would have been strange had there not been an aggressive capitalist class. The spirit of the Gilded Age can be understood when it is remembered that the business men of the period were pioneers—pioneers in industry, pioneers in the pursuit of wealth.¹⁸

The idealization of property so characteristic of the period was a natural result of the intensive pursuit of material possessions. Walt Whitman declared that "Democracy looks with suspicious, ill-satisfied eyes upon the very poor and on those out of business; she asks for men and women with occupations, well off, owners of houses and acres, and with cash in the bank."¹⁹ John Hay's *The Bread-Winners*, with its hostile treatment of discontented labor, its "odor of property-morality," was a natural and early literary manifestation of this attitude.²⁰ Josiah Strong remarked that the "Christian man who is not willing to make the largest profits which an honest regard for the laws of trade permits is a rare man."²¹ To the charge that the

¹⁷ Henry W. Cherouny, *The Burial of the Apprentice: A True Story from Life in a Union Workshop . . . and Other Essays on Present Political and Social Problems*, New York, 1900, p. 118.

¹⁸ Van Wyck Brooks, *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*, new and revised edition, New York, 1933, pp. 83 ff.

¹⁹ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 82.

²⁰ Vernon Louis Parrington, *The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America, 1860-1920*, New York, 1930, pp. 173 *et seq.*; Granville Hicks, *The Great Tradition, An Interpretation of American Literature since the Civil War*, New York, 1933, pp. 78-84; Tyler Dennett, *John Hay. From Poetry to Politics*, New York, 1933, Chap. X, *passim*.

²¹ Josiah Strong, *Our Country. Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*, revised edition, New York, 1891, p. 259; *cf.* p. 166.

Vanderbilts' wealth was a monstrous injustice in a democratic republic, one writer replied that "Mr. Vanderbilt is receiving a proportionally small, and a well earned part of the profits of the greatest economical device of modern times." He was merely being rewarded for his father's great services to mankind and more particularly to American society.²²

That tremendous appetite for wealth, which showed its worst side in the operations of Jay Gould, was amusingly satirized in the following bit of doggerel:

"JAY GOULD'S MODEST WANTS

My wants are few; I scorn to be
A querulous refiner;
I only want America
And a mortgage deed of China;
And if kind fate threw Europe in,
And Africa and Asia,
And a few islands of the sea,
I'd ask no other treasure.
Give me but these—they are enough
To suit my notion—
And I'll give up to other men
All land beneath the ocean."²³

The arrogance of wealth is illustrated by the words attributed to an American millionaire of the 'eighties who said of his class: "We are not politicians or public thinkers; we are the rich; we own America; we got it, God knows how, but we intend to keep it if we can. . . ."²⁴ The cry that American labor shared inadequately in the industrial wealth of the nation and that a large portion of the laboring class was impoverished was either never heard or flatly denied by capital. Andrew Carnegie, addressing the Nineteenth Century Club at the close of 1887, exclaimed, "I defy any man to show that there is pauperism" in the United States.²⁵ William Graham Sumner, closing his eyes to incontrovertible evidence, declared that pauper-

²² M. L. Scudder, Jr., *The Labor-Value Fallacy*, third edition, Chicago, 1887, pp. 76-79.

²³ S. W. Foss in *Tid-Bits*, undated clipping, New York Public Library Scrap-Books on Labor.

²⁴ Quoted in Virginius Dabney, *Liberalism in the South*, Chapel Hill, 1932,

²⁵ Quoted in *Social Science Review*, vol. 1, no. 2, December 14, 1887, p. 9.
p. 203.

ism did not characterize the American wage-earning class. "It is constantly alleged in vague and declamatory terms," he wrote, "that artisans and unskilled laborers are in distress and misery, or are under oppression. No facts to bear out these assertions are offered."²⁶

If they admitted the existence of poverty among a considerable portion of the working-class, business men were ready to ascribe it to inadequate education,²⁷ drink, laziness, and improvidence. Occasionally, they placed part of the responsibility upon the activities of manipulators and gamblers who were not to be confused with sober, honest industrialists.²⁸ Joseph Medill declared that the primary "cause of the impecunious condition of millions of the wage classes of this country is due to their own improvidence and misdirected efforts. Too many are trying to live without labor . . . and too many squander their earnings on intoxicating drinks, cigars and amusements, who cannot afford it."²⁹ It was easy to place the responsibility for inadequate wages and penury upon unalterable economic laws which determined the share that labor received. Thus, the Commercial Club of Boston was informed that

"There is certainly a very general complaint just now that labor does not get its share, that capital gets more than its share, that things ought not to go on as they have gone. . . . But complaints are not always well founded. Men as well as children often desire what they cannot and ought not to have. And complaining settles nothing. The existing mode of division is the work of certain natural laws. . . .

"It is perfectly right for the wage earner to get all he can. The employer will pay as little as he can. . . . It is the duty of the employer to sedulously regard the interests of those he employs, to deal fairly by them. Above all, every man imbued with the spirit of Christianity, the Christian in deed as well as in name, will strive to do as he would be done by.

²⁶ W. G. Sumner, "Industrial War," *Forum*, vol. 2, September, 1886, p. 3.

²⁷ See, however, the statement of a New England mill owner who in 1883 declared: "There is such a thing as too much education for working people sometimes. I don't mean to say by that that I discourage education . . . or that I think that with good sense any amount of education can hurt anyone, but I have seen cases where young people were spoiled for labor by being educated to a little too much refinement." *Rep. of the Sen. Com. on Lab.*, vol. 3, p. 15.

²⁸ R. Heber Newton, *The Present Aspect of the Labor Problem. Four Lectures Given in All Souls Church, New York, May 1886*, New York, 1886, pp. 21-25. The Rev. Newton's second lecture gives capital's view of the labor problem and of the existing economic order, pp. 21-36.

²⁹ *Rep. of the Sen. Com. on Lab.*, vol. 2, p. 959.

"But after all, one inexorable law finally settles this as it does so many other economic questions, and that is the law of demand and supply."³⁰

Not everyone, however, denied that the American worker had just ground for complaint, or ascribed such unfortunate conditions as existed to the operation of natural laws. In his first annual report in 1886, Commissioner Wright, discussing the effect of the industrial revolution upon the worker, declared that "if the question should be asked, has the wage-worker received his equitable share of the benefits derived from the introduction of machinery, the answer must be no. In the struggle for industrial supremacy in the great countries devoted to mechanical production, it probably has been impossible for him to share equitably in such benefits."³¹ Some of the State bureaus of labor or labor statistics pointed to evidences of the maldistribution of wealth, and concluded that labor did not receive a fair share in the returns of industry. Such assertions were made by the bureau of New Jersey in 1881 and 1883, of Illinois in 1882, and of Michigan in 1884.³² Some writers charged that State and Federal laws favored the few at the expense of the many. In an article in the *Contemporary Review*, Prof. Charles Kendall Adams reported that in 1886 a "very large proportion of our thoughtful writers were inclined to take it for granted that the wage-workers had a grievance that could, in some way, be corrected. The opinion was very general that . . . the masses of the people did not receive their fair share . . ."³³ When Francis A. Walker asserted that the "real labor problem of today" turned on the question of how the self-assertiveness of the working-class could be tempered, he made it clear that it was "rightful," and that it would make for an "equitable and beneficial distribution of wealth" which was then lacking.³⁴

Labor's grievances sprang from the privileges and corruption of

³⁰ A. S. Wheeler, *The Labor Question. A Paper Read before the Commercial Club of Boston, October 16, 1886. Reprinted from the Andover Review for November, 1886*, Boston, 1886, pp. 3, 8.

³¹ *First Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor*, pp. 88-89.

³² Cited in Richmond Mayo Smith, "American Labor Statistics," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 1, March, 1886, p. 53.

³³ "Contemporary Life and Thought in the United States," *Contemporary Review*, vol. 52, November, 1887, pp. 731-732.

³⁴ Francis A. Walker, *The Labor Problem of Today. An Address Delivered before the Alumni Association of Lehigh University, June 22d, 1887*, New York, 1887, pp. 8, 14.

the American political system, the growth of a small, immensely wealthy class, the results of corporate industrial organization, and the economic and social condition of the wage-earners at large and certain groups of them in particular. Protests against monopolies and large corporations filled the air during the period. The latter were denounced as sources of "outrage" and "corruption" and destroyers of human rights. National and State governments, it was charged, had been captured by corporate interests, for whose benefit they legislated at the expense of the many. The courts were stigmatized as subservient tools of the vested interests. A contributor to the *Catholic Quarterly Review* summed up current attitudes in the assertion that "it is futile for the public press to be constantly preaching platitudes respecting patience and regard for the rights of the employers and respect for law, whilst evasions and defiant violations, constantly practised by mammoth capitalists and corporations, are ignored, condoned and tacitly approved."³⁵

If one examines the economic and social condition of the American working-class during the 'eighties, one can understand why labor was restive and discontented.

Though statistical information on pauperism in the United States before 1890 is lacking, there is sufficient evidence to leave no doubt concerning its existence. It is safe to say that a considerable number of American wage-earners lived below the poverty level. Estimates for the early 'nineties indicate that ten per cent of the total population of urban districts was poverty-stricken.³⁶ This would probably be true, roughly speaking, for the preceding decade. Samuel Gompers offered, in 1883, some interesting conjectures on the extent of pauperism in the United States. Taking the census statistics of 1870 for

³⁵ George D. Wolff, "The Wage Question," *The Catholic Quarterly Review*, vol. 11, no. 42, April, 1886, pp. 343-344. For characteristic and different types of protest in behalf of labor, see the *Rep. of the Sen. Com. on Lab.*, vol. 1-4, *passim*; Newton, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-20, *passim*; Richard T. Ely, *The Labor Movement in America*, new and revised edition, New York, 1905, p. 61, Appendix I, No. VIII, pp. 371-373; The Hon. Stewart L. Woodford, *The Labor Problem. Annual Oration Before the New York Delta of Phi Beta Kappa* (New York, 1886), *passim*; McNeill, *op. cit.*, chap. XVII, *passim*; Walter B. Hill, *Anarchy, Socialism, and the Labor Movement. An Address Delivered Before the Literary Societies of the University of Georgia, July 19, 1886*, Columbus, Ga., 1886, pp. 23-25, 37 *et seq.*

³⁶ Thomas Sewall Adams and Helen L. Sumner, *Labor Problems*, eighth edition, New York, 1911, p. 150.

the five greatest manufacturing States, New York, Massachusetts, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Illinois, he showed that the average annual wages for industrial workers came to about \$405.64. With five individuals in the average family, the amount for the support of each one was \$81.149. There were in those five States in 1870, Gompers pointed out, "62,494 paupers, maintained by the States at a cost of \$6,161,354, or a fraction over \$95 per individual. Thus it appears that the workingman was compelled to support himself above the degree of 'pauperism' on \$14 less per annum than the State spent to support paupers as paupers. These figures are, of course, old, but they can be depended upon, except that the wage of the workingmen is less now than it was in 1870."⁸⁷ Gompers' argument is open to serious objections, but it is not incorrect in its insistence upon the existence of a pauper class. It was said more than once that "dire want" and "superfluity"⁸⁸ were characteristic of the American scene.

Implicit in the statistics of the distribution of national wealth and income is the fact that a considerable part of the American working-class lived neither far from nor securely above the poverty line. On the basis of the census of 1890, Charles B. Spahr concluded that 200,000 families had an annual income of \$5,000 and over; 1,300,000 families an income of from \$1,200 to \$5,000; 11,000,000 families an income under \$1,200. The average annual income from labor per family for the last group was \$380. He computed that one per cent of the families received nearly a fourth of the national income, while fifty per cent of the families received barely a fifth. More than half of the aggregate income of the country was enjoyed by one-eighth of the families, and the richest one per cent received a larger total income than the poorest fifty per cent. The great majority of small property owners, both urban and rural, possessed barely one-eighth of the national wealth, and one per cent of the families had more wealth than the remaining ninety-nine per cent. Of the twelve million families in the country, about five and one-half million could be classed as propertyless.⁸⁹

"I have a brother who has four children, besides his wife and him-

⁸⁷ *Rep. of the Sen. Com. on Lab.*, vol. 1, pp. 291-292.

⁸⁸ Strong, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

⁸⁹ Charles B. Spahr, *An Essay on the Present Distribution of Wealth in the United States*, New York, 1896, pp. 68-69, 128-129, 158-159; cf. pp. 50-52; *Free Society*, May 6, 1900, p. 2; Strong, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

self," reported a workingman in 1883. "All he earns is \$1.50 a day." This was the abbreviated life history of thousands. He continued: "He works in the ironworks at Fall River. He only works about nine months out of twelve. There is generally about three months of stoppage, taking the year right through, and his wife and his family all have to be supported for a year out of the wages of nine months—\$1.50 a day for nine months out of the twelve, to support six of them. It does not stand to reason that those children and he himself can have natural food or be naturally dressed."⁴⁰ Speaking of the industrial population of Fall River, especially of the mill operatives, a physician of that city declared that as a class they were "dwarfed physically," and that their careworn attitude always impressed visitors. "... most of them," he asserted, "are obliged to live from hand to mouth, or, at least, they do not have sufficient food to nourish them as they need to be nourished." If they drank, it was to find escape from the realities of life and its oppressive ennui.⁴¹ A Chicago printer, active in labor circles, made it clear in 1883 that the workmen of his city bitterly resented their condition. "The very fact of their living in the squalor and wretchedness they do live in," he said, "has provoked discontent in their minds; and in all our labor agitations, wherever there is any particular excitement aroused, these men who feel that they are oppressed are ready for almost any remedy. Even if it reached a revolution, if you chose, they are ripe for it." The lower class workers found it impossible to save money. "They don't receive enough wages . . ." he explained. "Instead of laying up money or anything of that kind, they are not able to earn enough to support themselves and their families."⁴²

This picture of the poorer working people of Chicago is perhaps overdrawn, but it is not entirely misleading. What was true of the pushing Lake City was roughly true of practically every urban center in the country. Careful investigation of the tenement areas of the city in 1883-1884, undertaken by the Citizens' Association of Chicago—interested not only in civic improvement,⁴³ but also in lower rents, which would mean reduced wages and a source of profitable real

⁴⁰ *Rep. of the Sen. Com. on Lab.*, vol. 3, p. 452.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 408-415, *passim*.

⁴² *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 574-576, *passim*. The statements were made by P. H. Logan.

⁴³ The Citizens' Association was a civic reform organization.

estate investment—disclosed the existence of frightful conditions. The report which followed the investigation speaks of “the wretched condition of the tenements into which thousands of workingmen are huddled, the wholesale violation of all rules for drainage, plumbing, light, ventilation and safety in case of fire or accident, the neglect of all laws of health, the horrible condition of sewers and outhouses, the filthy dingy rooms into which they are crowded, the unwholesome character of their food, and the equally filthy nature of the neighboring streets, alleys and back lots filled with decaying matter and stagnant pools.”⁴⁴ For these “unwholesome dens” into which they were crowded, working-class families paid extravagant rents in proportion to the wages they received.⁴⁵ In many cases, they were “fleeced at a rate which returns 25 to 40 per cent per annum of the value of the property.”⁴⁶ Those with small incomes had to live on the outskirts of the city—which was perhaps why Chicago spread like quicksilver—to secure decent housing, or else occupy “pigsties” in the city proper.⁴⁷ Chicago, it may be noted, with an average of over eight persons to a dwelling, and with about seventeen per cent of the dwellings containing three or more families, appears to have had housing facilities which were superior to other urban centers.⁴⁸

There is little wonder that many of Chicago's inhabitants displayed “sullen discontent.” Of a population of approximately 630,000 in 1884, a quarter of a million were classed as adult wage-earners, and the vast majority of these, caught between low wages and high rents for bad dwellings, had good ground for complaint. Dissatisfaction was keen among large groups of the foreign born. Slightly less than half of Chicago's inhabitants were of foreign origin, with the Germans far in the lead and the Bohemians following with about 35,000 to 40,000. Many of both nationalities had come to the United States hoping to find both a haven and an earthly heaven.

⁴⁴ *Report of the Committee on Tenement Houses of the Citizens' Association of Chicago, September, 1884*, Chicago, 1884, p. 3.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴⁸ Marcus T. Reynolds, *The Housing of the Poor in American Cities. The Prize Essay of the American Economic Association for 1892*. (*Publications of the American Economic Association*, vol. 8, nos. 2 and 3), London, March and May, 1893, pp. 19, 30; Strong, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

Among the Bohemians, largely low-paid laborers who lived in a wretched quarter of the city, dissatisfaction ran high.⁴⁹

Jane Addams' *Twenty Years at Hull House*, though it treats essentially of the years after 1889, is an indictment of the social conditions under which tens of thousands of the inhabitants of Chicago lived and labored during the entire decade.⁵⁰ In it is the story of Chicago's squalid and crowded tenements, of the lack of the necessary sanitation provisions, adequate municipal legislation, charitable organizations, and relief facilities, of the thousands sunk in dire poverty, of the conditions that make for a diseased community, and of the unawareness of all this. Nor was Chicago unique in this. America of the 'eighties may not have been conscious of its Chicagos—Jane Addams writes of the "unfounded optimism that there was no real poverty among us"⁵¹—but they existed.

Standard of living and particular living conditions are, of course, causally related to wages, both money and real. Especially during the 'eighties, did the American worker insist that he was being underpaid. He did not receive enough for his labor as such, and he did not receive enough to lead a decent existence. The industrial depression which was first felt in 1882, made available a large labor surplus in certain occupations by 1883, led to keen competition for employment, and tended to depress wages.⁵² In the textile industry, for example, this was the case. "I stand every morning in my factory," said a New England manufacturer, "and am obliged to refuse the applications of men who want to come to work for a dollar a day . . . and women begging for the opportunity to work for 50

⁴⁹ *Rep. of the Com. on Ten. Houses of the Cit. Assn. of Chicago*, p. 10; *The University*, Chicago, February 6, 1886, clipping, Labadie Scrap-Book; *Hull House Maps and Papers. A Presentation of Nationalities and Wages in a Congested District of Chicago, together with Comments and Essays on Problems Growing Out of the Social Conditions*, New York, 1895; Josepha Humpal Zeman, "The Bohemian People in Chicago," pp. 115-119 *passim*; Claudius O. Johnson, *Carter Henry Harrison I, Political Leader* (*Social Science Studies Directed by the Local Community Research Committee of the University of Chicago*), Chicago, 1928, p. 189.

⁵⁰ New York, 1911, *passim* and especially pp. 99-100, 158, 194-195, 198-199, 201-202, 281; Strong, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

⁵¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 158.

⁵² For the causes of the depression, see *First Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor*, pp. 291-292. Wages in Massachusetts in 1885, were about five per cent lower than they were in 1880, Spahr, *op. cit.*, p. 98 note.

cents a day. . . . It is evident . . . that there are a large number of men who desire to be employed at the low rates of wages now prevailing, and who cannot find employment."⁵³

Despite the fact that the wage statistics gathered in the period are not always reliable, it appears that hourly money wages, recovering in 1880 from the effects of the depression beginning in 1873, rose to 1883, dropped somewhat in the following year and, after slight upward and downward movements in 1886, started to climb again in 1887. A more optimistic, but probably less accurate version of wage movements for the years 1883-1886 gives the same index figure for hourly wages for four solid years. That is to say, money wages at best remained at a fixed point for 1883-1886.⁵⁴

A glance at actual money wages has value. In a number of New England textile mills, the daily earnings for all types of employees, male and female, ranged from \$.50 to \$1.80. This was for a working day running somewhat above ten hours. Most of the skilled male hands earned slightly better than one dollar a day, while women, of course, received less. Average weekly wages of \$7.50-8.00 were considered better than fair, and in general the average monthly income was not much above \$20. Only in comparatively few cases did it reach twice that sum. The wages of carpenters in 1883 averaged \$1.45 a day for the entire year, although their actual money wage for time worked came to about one dollar more than that. Compositors in Massachusetts in the same year earned, on the basis of piecework, an average weekly wage of \$7-9, which was probably what their income was elsewhere. The daily average wage of machine shop workers in 1883 was \$2.00, although many earned as little as \$1.25, and in some cases men were paid \$4.00 a day. Certain classes of skilled shipyard mechanics received lower daily wages than the same class of labor in New England. In Delaware they earned from \$10-12 a week, while in New York their wages ran higher at \$2.60-3.50 a day. P. J. McGuire, General Secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, claimed on the basis of government fig-

⁵³ *Rep. of the Sen. Com. on Lab.*, vol. 2, p. 1117.

⁵⁴ Willford Isbell King, *The Wealth and Income of the People of the United States*, New York, 1923, table XXXVII, p. 198; *Handbook of Labor Statistics, 1929 Edition. Bulletin of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, Miscellaneous Series, No. 491*, Washington, 1929, p. 760. For movements of mining wages bearing out these generalizations, see Spahr, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

ures, that in 1883 the average earnings of workmen throughout the United States came to slightly more than a dollar a day.⁵⁵

Inadequate and incomplete statistical returns for the State of Illinois in 1884, show that yearly earnings of heads of families ranged between \$210 and \$1,608. The average earnings were \$525.27, and this sum was increased on the average, by the income of other members of the family to \$588. Yearly average living expenses were estimated at \$507.56. Of the wage-earning heads of families investigated, twenty-four per cent failed to make a living, nine per cent barely made ends meet, and sixty-seven per cent enjoyed some surplus.⁵⁶ In Massachusetts, the average annual living costs of a workman's family in 1883 were put at \$754.42. The average income of wage-earning heads of families was \$558.68. The difference between the two figures had to be supplied by the earnings of wives and children if the family was not to fall below the poverty line. This placed almost a third of the support of the average family upon others than its head.⁵⁷

Broadly speaking, wages in Illinois were higher in 1882 than they were in 1886. Of 114 organized occupations for which there are adequate statistics, seventy-one show a decrease in average weekly wage between 1882 and 1886, twenty-three show an increase, and twenty remained the same. Excluding the occupations which experienced a drop in wages of five per cent or less, almost sixty per cent of the trades examined suffered wage decreases. The average weekly wages for all 114 occupations came to \$15.34 in 1882 and to \$14.51 in 1886. Since the workers were employed only seventy-five per cent of full time during the year, the average yearly wage came to \$566.19. This was approximately \$50 more than the annual average for the unorganized employees in the same occupations. The only trades which could boast of wage increases for the years 1882-1886 were those which were well organized; and trade unions reported greater success in maintaining or even increasing wages than assemblies of the Knights of Labor.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ These wage figures come from *Rep. of the Sen. Com. on Lab.*, vol. 3, pp. 4, 28, 74, 125; vol. 1, pp. 320, 552-553, 757, 838-839.

⁵⁶ Smith, *loc. cit.*, p. 70; cf. Strong, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-148.

⁵⁷ Strong, *op. cit.*, p. 147. Compare with the earnings in Massachusetts in 1890, Spahr, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.

⁵⁸ *Fourth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of Illinois, 1886*, Springfield, 1866, tables XXXI-XXXV, pp. 335-361.

Wage levels in these years in the State of Illinois appear representative of the country at large. An investigation of the earnings of almost 140,000 employees in 552 establishments scattered throughout twenty-eight States and covering some forty industries in 1886, shows that the average daily wage of male workers was almost two dollars. With an average of 282.6 working days a year, this gives an annual average income of \$565.20. The income of women and children in industry was strikingly lower. The average daily wage of the first came to \$1.11, and of the second to \$.70. Though the figures cover a relatively small portion of the six million wage-earners in the country,⁵⁹ the industries and States considered are so representative that the conclusions may be safely accepted.⁶⁰

For those employed with some regularity, the tendency of wages to remain fixed or move downward was more than equalized before 1886 by changes in commodity prices and the general cost of living. Commodity prices, recovering from the depression of 1873-78, had risen more rapidly than wages between 1879 and 1882. They began to fall precipitately after the last year, and did not move upward again until 1886. In purchasing power wages declined in 1880, only to be followed by a gradual upward movement in the next year which continued until 1885. The slight drop in real wages in 1886 became more pronounced in 1887, but in the following year there was again a recovery.⁶¹

Labor, however, did not gain as much as might be expected from the rise in real wages between 1881-1885, because of the irregularity of employment. While precise statistics for unemployment are lacking, there can be no doubt that a considerable portion of the wage-earning class were always unemployed for a part of the year, and that practically all workers experienced some irregularity of employment. These generalizations are supported by the findings in Massachusetts. In 1885, the industrial population of that State lost on the average 1.16 working months during the year. At the same time, almost thirty per cent of the industrial wage-earners were unemployed at their particular trades for 4.11 months during the year.

⁵⁹ Paul H. Douglas, "An Analysis of Strike Statistics," 1881-1921, *Journal of American Statistical Association*, n. s. no. 143 (vol. 18), September, 1923, p. 869. Douglas gives 6,905,000 as the average number of industrial workers for 1886-1890.

⁶⁰ *First Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor*, p. 226.

⁶¹ King, *op. cit.*, table XXXVII, p. 198; cf. Adams and Sumner, *op. cit.*, p. 514.

The Massachusetts Commissioner of Labor concluded that about one-third of the persons engaged in remunerative labor were unemployed at their principal occupation for about one-third of the working time.⁶² Statistics covering more than 85,000 industrial wage-earners in the State of Illinois for 1885-1886 show that they were employed, on the average, 37.1 weeks in the year. Three per cent received twenty or less weeks of work during the year; thirty-two per cent received between twenty and thirty weeks' work; thirty per cent received between thirty and forty weeks' work; and thirty-five per cent between forty and fifty-two weeks' work. These figures show that the average worker was normally idle about one-fourth of the possible working time during the year.⁶³

If, in the best of times, there was a constant unemployed class of two and one-half per cent of the total wage-earners in the country, as was asserted at the time, Carroll D. Wright's estimate of almost one million unemployed persons in 1885 in agriculture, trade, transportation, mining, manufacturing, and mechanical occupations, may be regarded as conservative. Since the depression of 1882-1886 hit industry in particular, the vast majority of the unemployed were industrial wage-earners. This unemployment, it was computed, accounted for a daily loss of consumptive power of one million dollars. Other contemporary estimates of unemployment set much higher figures. Terence V. Powderly, General Master Workman of the Knights of Labor, spoke of the widespread unemployment that affected the country from 1883 on, and declared that from one and a half to two million men were out of work in 1885. It was shortly after asserted that the unemployed reached two million in 1886.⁶⁴ Inevitably the

⁶² Cited in Adams and Sumner, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-161; Spahr, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-102.

⁶³ *Fourth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of Illinois*, table XXVII, pp. 318-319.

⁶⁴ *First Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor*, pp. 65-66; Terence V. Powderly, "The Army of the Discontented," *North American Review*, vol. 140, April, 1885, p. 369; *Record of the Proceedings of the Ninth Regular Session of the General Assembly, Held at Hamilton, Ont., Oct. 5-13, 1885*, n. p., 1885, p. 11; *Labor: Its Rights and Wrongs. Statements and Comments by the Leading Men of Our Nation on the Labor Question of To-Day* . . . Washington, 1886, pp. 305-306; McNeill, *op. cit.*, pp. 575-576. S. B. Elkins put the number of unemployed in 1885 at 350,000; Hon. S. B. Elkins, *The Industrial Question in the United States. Address Delivered before the Alumni Association of the University of the State of Missouri, June 3, 1885*, New York (1885), p. 7.

feeling became widespread among American workers that a decrease in hours would reduce unemployment, and that they were not adequately paid for the goods and values they produced during the normal working day.⁶⁵

Most industrial problems and most labor discontent arose in connection with the primary questions of employment, wages and hours. There were, however, other sources of antagonism between employer and worker in the secondary conditions of labor in a number of industrial practises to which employers resorted. The latter include the black-list, the iron-clad oath and the practise of assessing fines and charges. While these affected only some workers, they called forth protests from American labor at large.

Fining, most common in retail stores, hotels, and restaurants, was also found in factories, generally only in those employing large numbers of women and children. Workers were fined for coming late, for being absent without permission, for singing or talking with one another during working hours, for unusual noise, for imperfections in the work, and for a host of arbitrary reasons. Fines were sometimes assessed to the extent of two and three per cent of the weekly wages, without any statement of the reasons for their imposition. It is true, of course, that fining affected industry to a minor extent at this time, and there was almost none of it among male factory workers. It was most in evidence in the older manufacturing States, but was spreading to all. In severely condemning the system in 1886, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of Illinois pointed out that fining was a development of the past five years, and that while it had not yet made deep inroads, the practise was growing rapidly.⁶⁶

A series of investigations by the *Chicago Times* of the factories of Chicago, especially those employing women and children, disclosed in 1888 that the fining practise had spread. Frequently employees lost a considerable portion of the \$3-4 weekly they received for a ten hour day through fines.⁶⁷

Other burdensome charges were levied upon employees. Female operatives, especially in the clothing industry, were sometimes forced

⁶⁵ For hours, see below pp. 34-35, 159-160 [in *History of the Haymarket Affair*].

⁶⁶ *Fourth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of Illinois*, pp. 501-506, 507-509, 510-526.

⁶⁷ John P. Altgeld, *Live Questions: Including Our Penal Machinery and Its Victims*, Chicago, 1890, pp. 80-89 ("Slave Girls in Chicago").

to contribute a certain per cent of the weekly wage to pay for the machines upon which they worked. If the worker left her employ before the machine was paid for, she usually forfeited her "contributions." Payments for needles and thread were common, and frequently workers were required to cover the expense of repairing machines. In at least one instance, the employer levied a charge of twenty-five cents weekly upon each operative for the steam by which the factory was run. There were authenticated instances where female operatives lost one-half of their weekly wages—which generally came to about five dollars—because of such charges.⁶⁸ Another practise, also found widely among female workers, compelled new hands to turn over a portion of the first week's wages as surety against quitting the factory before the expiration of a six months' period or without giving two weeks' notice. If the proper notice were given or six months had elapsed, the money was returned. Where this rule was rigidly enforced, an employee would lose the sum deposited for failing to report to work on any one day before the half year was up.⁶⁹

The iron-clad oath, comparable to the yellow-dog contract of the present day, was employed to prevent the unionization of factories and shops. The oath affirmed that the signer was not a member of a labor organization, did not contemplate joining and would never join one. In its broadest sense it prohibited the members of a shop from collective action or even consultation of any kind. It was usually accompanied by a pernicious system of spying which employers were informed of infractions of the oath. Membership in a labor organization of any sort was, for one who had signed it, cause for instant dismissal. Where labor organizations were weak or were in process of formation, the iron-clad oath was a particularly potent weapon. Workers had no legal redress against it. It was successfully used on many occasions to drive workers out of their organizations, or at least make such membership secret.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Knights of Labor of America. Eleventh Regular Session, Held at Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 4 to 19, 1887*, n. p., 1887 (cited hereafter as *Proceedings of G. A., K. of L., 1887*), pp. 1584-1588.

⁶⁹ *Fourth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of Illinois*, pp. 507-508.

⁷⁰ *Proceedings of G. A., K. of L., 1887*, pp. 1715, 1737, 1776; *Alarm*, December

Against the black-list the worker was given statutory protection by some States and in practically all of them its use could be prosecuted as a conspiracy punishable at common law.⁷¹ Few wage-earners were cognizant of this, however, and court action was rarely taken in essence, the black-list was the employers' method of boycotting obnoxious workers. Names on the list were circularized among employers within the same trade, and workers thus distinguished found it impossible to secure employment within a given district or even in other regions. Commonly regarded by workers as the cause of the labor boycott, to which it was analogous, the black-list was employed almost solely against men engaged in union activities. It served, therefore, as a supplementary weapon to the iron-clad oath. In the 'eighties, and especially by 1886, it was increasingly popular among employers. It was most bitterly resented in organized labor circles, which regarded its employment as a blanket declaration of war against union labor by the employer.⁷² Employers also often imported foreign and colored workers into a troublesome locality to prevent the formation of labor organizations or destroy those which already existed.⁷³

A limited number of workers found a grievance in the fact that they received their wages partly in cash and partly in goods or orders for goods. This practise obtained largely in the coal industry, where the company store system was frequently found with it. In Illinois, about one-fifth of the wage-earners in the coal industry were subject to the burdens of the system. In most instances, these stores sold goods at prices above those prevailing in the locality, and frequently they profiteered to the extent of twenty per cent above normal prices.⁷⁴ In many regions, reported Carroll D. Wright in 1886, "employment depends partially upon taking goods out of the companies' stores."⁷⁵ Large numbers of workers likewise found the custom of

17, 1887 (contains reprint of typical iron-clad oath); *A Summary of the Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of New York, January 21, 1886*, Albany, 1886, p. 25; Newton, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

⁷¹ See below, pp. 42 *et seq.* [in *The History of the Haymarket Affair*].

⁷² Newton, *op. cit.*, p. 17; Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 47; *Proceedings of G. A., K. of L., 1887*, pp. 1408, 1666, 1667.

⁷³ *Proceedings of G. A., K. of L., 1887*, pp. 1669-1670.

⁷⁴ *Fourth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of Illinois*, pp. 321-327, 333-334.

⁷⁵ *First Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor*, p. 244.

paying wages at fortnightly or monthly intervals burdensome,⁷⁶ and some States passed laws to protect the worker from employers who withheld his earnings for too long a time.

Obviously, not all American workers were being subjected to the unjust conditions which produced the working-class discontent of the period. But the unpleasant elements in the industrial scene cannot be glossed over, and the latter cannot be presented in the roseate light in which many of its contemporaries saw it. The American worker, it is true, was less rigidly fixed in his economic class and function than the European; passage into another class was easier for him; he enjoyed a degree of social equality and freedom, as well as material advantages, which the European did not. All this was frequently pointed out at the time.⁷⁷ Yet it does not follow that the American workingman had no reason for complaint, or that he was not conscious of the inequalities in American society. In 1888, James Bryce observed that

"There are no struggles between privileged and unprivileged orders, not even that perpetual strife of rich and poor. . . . No one of the questions which now agitate the nation is a question between rich and poor. Instead of suspicion, jealousy, and arrogance embittering the relations of classes, good feeling and kindness reign. Everything that government, as the Americans have . . . understood the term, can give them, the poorer class have already. . . . Hence the poorer have had little to fight for, no grounds for disliking the well-to-do, few complaints to make against them."

Bryce placed upon the shoulders of foreigners who brought "their Old World passions with them," responsibility for the cries of protest which were raised and the labor disturbances which occurred.⁷⁸

His judgment, however, cannot be accepted as either adequate or accurate. The elements which disturbed the serenity of the industrial scene were not exceptional to it—they cannot be regarded as rare abnormalities—and it was not alone the "foreigner" who was cognizant of them. If the worker aired his grievances, it was because he had full reason. America had reached a stage in economic development where a tranquil industrial life and a contended working class were practical impossibilities.

⁷⁶ *Fourth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of Illinois*, p. 326.

⁷⁷ James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, 2 vols., new edition, New York, 1927, vol. 2, pp. 300 ff., 647-649, Chap. CXIX, *passim*.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 647-648.

JULIUS W. PRATT

THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR is often used by historians to mark the entrance of the United States upon the stage of world politics. Yet the events of the war itself offer a less than satisfactory explanation of our change in national foreign policy. It is difficult, for example, to see at first glance how a sincere effort to bring freedom to the oppressed Cubans could result in the formation of an American empire.

The task of explaining the psychological background of the war and the changes in attitude which undermined our traditional disinterestedness in global affairs fell into the capable hands of Julius W. Pratt. When Pratt undertook his study, he had already established an enviable reputation with a book on a similar theme, called *Expansionists of 1812*. Whereas previous historians had attributed the War of 1812 to maritime grievances against Great Britain, Pratt broke new ground by asserting that the conflict stemmed from an expansionist urge on the part of the United States which was being frustrated by British agitation among the western Indians.

The connection between these two studies is suggested by the title of the first chapter in *Expansionists of 1898*: "The New Manifest Destiny." Pratt implies that the same kind of impulse which carried Americans into the War of 1812 and eventually across the continent also sent them to Cuba and planted the American flag in the Philippines. But this "manifest destiny" of the Spanish-American War period had its own characteristics which required separate investigation.

Although Pratt's analysis of American thought at the close of

the nineteenth century is hardly flattering to the national ego, it is not built solely upon the narrow economic determinism which other critics have used in condemning the war's imperialistic aftermath. It is his contention that the expansionist urge in America was compounded of many elements. In the foreground he places religious figures such as Josiah Strong and intellectual figures such as John W. Burgess, who talked and wrote about the desirability of expansion when businessmen were apathetic to it. Instead of having economic motives, these leaders urged a spread of American influence in the name of humanity, asserting that the benefits of Christianity and of the Anglo-Saxon genius for political organization justified imperialistic behavior and outweighed any evils which might result from it. The "white man's burden" was to spread and maintain a superior civilization. To differentiate this attitude from that which sought conquest for reasons of exploitation, a new phrase, "the imperialism of righteousness," was ultimately coined and publicized.

As the trouble with Spain increased, Pratt found the business community sitting on the side lines, fearful lest the popular clamor for assistance to the starving and persecuted Cubans would bring on a war which might upset the prosperity returning under President William McKinley. Except for a few scattered investors, the only people eager for colonial acquisitions for economic purposes appeared to be politicians and intellectuals such as James Blaine, Albert Beveridge, and Alfred Mahan. Then, with Dewey's victory at Manila, Pratt noted a quick conversion in the business community. The explanation lay in China rather than in the West Indies. A Wall Street which had been unwilling to intervene in Cuba either for the sake of the natives or of American investments became suddenly interested in a war with Spain because of the opportunity it presented of obtaining a "gateway to the Orient." The peace treaty, in which Spain yielded the Philippines and Guam as well as Puerto Rico, gave substance to this concern for trade in the East and reflected a quickly developing interest in colonial markets.

Little criticism has been made of Pratt's exposition of the role of the nonbusiness groups in preparing the way for the Spanish-American War and for a wider role for America in world affairs. In his focus upon the quick change in business opinion and its relation to the acquisition of the Philippines, Pratt throws considerable light upon the immediate situation; but at the same time he may have inadvertently minimized long-range trends arising from America's growing ability to supply the world with her products. American exports preceded the idea that imperialism could be righteous; and the assumption that the government would foster and protect the national commerce dated at least as far back as the day when Thomas Jefferson went to war with the Barbary pirates.

Such observations do not imply that Pratt's work is not essentially valid. Rather, his book remains an effective and lasting rebuttal both to those who see in the Spanish-American War simply the result of idealistic compassion and to those who deny America any humanitarian impulse and see only the pursuit of profitable investments. Neither an apologist nor a cynic, Pratt illustrates admirably the balance for which historians strive.

The New Manifest Destiny

ON MARCH 24, 1895, there died obscurely in New York a one-time journalist and diplomat, John Louis O'Sullivan by name. Fifty years before, he had enriched the national vocabulary with the potent phrase, "manifest destiny," and had, as editor of the *Democratic Review* and as an acquaintance of Presidents Polk, Pierce, and Buchanan, urged energetically the policy of

From *Expansionists of 1898* by Julius W. Pratt, by permission of the Johns Hopkins Press.

expansion which the phrase embodied.¹ Thereafter, both he and his idea had fallen upon evil times. O'Sullivan had been a Democrat and a Southern sympathizer, and the idea for which he stood had been too frequently connected with the cause of slavery-extension to escape a share of the discredit suffered by the latter. The close of the Civil War found O'Sullivan an exile in Europe. The efforts of Seward as Secretary of State and Grant as President to revive the expansionist policy of pre-war days met with little popular support.²

But while the passing years only deepened the obscurity surrounding the man, they brought a surprising resurrection of the idea which he had advocated and even of the phrase which he had coined. Before O'Sullivan's death, "manifest destiny" was again in the air. There was new talk of expansion, which now found its chief support not as formerly among Democrats but in the other political camp—in what O'Sullivan had once described as the party of "wicked and crazy Republicanism." It was the Republican party which in 1892 pledged its belief in "the achievement of the manifest destiny of the republic in its broadest sense."³ It was a Republican administration which gave most sympathetic support to the project of an American-controlled isthmian canal and which sought naval bases for the United States in Hawaii and Samoa and in various Caribbean islands. It was a Republican Senator who proclaimed, in an article which O'Sullivan may well have read just before his death, that the United States should extend its limits from the Rio Grande to the Arctic Ocean, should build a Nicaraguan canal, control Hawaii, maintain its influence in Samoa, and own Cuba; that, since "the great nations [were] rapidly absorbing for their future expansion and their present defence all the waste places of the earth," the United States, as one of the great nations, "must not fall out of the line of march."⁴ In fact, the United States was about to embark, under Republican

1 Julius W. Pratt, "John L. O'Sullivan and Manifest Destiny," *New York History*, XIV, 213-234. Dr. Albert K. Weinberg in his *Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History*, has made an elaborate study of the ideas advanced at various periods in justification of the acquisition of new territory by the United States.

2 T. C. Smith, "Expansion after the Civil War, 1865-1871," *Political Science Quarterly*, XVI, 412-436.

3 E. Stanwood, *A History of the Presidency from 1788 to 1897*, p. 496.

4 H. C. Lodge, "Our Blundering Foreign Policy," *The Forum*, XIX, 8-17.

leadership, upon a new career of expansion, which was to be justified if not motivated by new interpretations of "manifest destiny."

The manifest destiny of the 1840's had been largely a matter of emotion. Much of it had been simply one expression of a half-blind faith in the superior virility of the American race and the superior beneficence of American political institutions. In the intervening years, much had been done to provide this emotional concept with a philosophic backing. The expansionists of the 1890's were able to cite the lessons of science and of history in support of their doctrine. Far-fetched and fallacious as their reasoning may appear to us, it nevertheless carried conviction to some of the best minds of the period.

Prominent among the conceptions which contributed to the new expansionist philosophy was the Darwinian hypothesis of evolution through natural selection. If the continuous struggle for existence among biological forms resulted in the elimination of the unfit and the emergence of higher types, why might not the same law hold good in human society? If the survival of the fittest was the law of nature and the path of progress, surely the more gifted races need offer neither apologies nor regrets when they suppressed, supplanted, or destroyed their less talented competitors. And who could doubt that the Anglo-Saxon race, especially in its American branch, possessed those superior talents which entitled it to survive? Certainly not Charles Darwin, the founder of the creed. In his second great work, *The Descent of Man*, the English scientist included a passage well calculated to flatter American self-esteem.

There is apparently much truth [he wrote] in the belief that the wonderful progress of the United States, as well as the character of the people, are the results of natural selection; the more energetic, restless, and courageous men from all parts of Europe having emigrated during the last ten or twelve generations to that great country, and having there succeeded best. Looking to the distant future, I do not think that the Rev. Mr. Zincke takes an exaggerated view when he says: "All other series of events—as that which resulted in the culture of mind in Greece, and that which resulted in the empire of Rome—only appear to have purpose and value when viewed in connection with, or rather as subsidiary to, . . . the great stream of Anglo-Saxon emigration to the west."⁵

⁵ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, I, 179.

In thus hailing the American as "the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time," Darwin was merely recording what seemed to him a scientific fact. He was not preaching a message or advocating a policy. It was not difficult, however, to derive a practical lesson from such a premise, and this task was gladly undertaken by certain of Darwin's disciples in the United States. Among the foremost of these was the historian, John Fiske. A convert to the theory of evolution since his undergraduate days at Harvard—where he had been threatened with expulsion for his unorthodox opinions—he became one of its chief popularizers in the United States.⁶ In an essay entitled "Manifest Destiny," which he published in *Harper's Magazine* in 1885, it is easy to detect the working of the evolutionary theory. After stressing the superior character of Anglo-Saxon institutions and the overwhelming growth of Anglo-Saxon numbers and power, Fiske remarked:

It is enough to point to the general conclusion that the work which the English race began when it colonized North America is destined to go on until every land on the earth's surface that is not already the seat of an old civilization shall become English in its language, in its religion, in its political habits and traditions, and to a predominant extent in the blood of its people. The day is at hand when four-fifths of the human race will trace its pedigree to English forefathers, as four-fifths of the white people of the United States trace their pedigree to-day. The race thus spread over both hemispheres, and from the rising to the setting sun, will not fail to keep that sovereignty of the sea and that commercial supremacy which it began to acquire when England first stretched its arm across the Atlantic to the shores of Virginia and Massachusetts.

Even the English language, he believed, would "ultimately become the language of mankind."⁷

Another widely read author whose ideas closely resembled Fiske's and whose indebtedness to Darwin was no less obvious was the Congregational clergyman, Josiah Strong. In 1885 he published a small

The passage quoted and endorsed by Darwin is from Rev. F. B. Zincke, *Last Winter in the United States*, p. 29.

⁶ See the sketch of Fiske by J. T. Adams in *Dictionary of American Biography*, VI, 420-423.

⁷ John Fiske, "Manifest Destiny," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, LXX, 578-590. This essay was also published in Fiske's *American Political Ideas Viewed from the Standpoint of Universal History*, pp. 101-152.

volume entitled *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*, in which appeared a chapter on "The Anglo-Saxon and the World's Future." The Anglo-Saxon, he asserted, as the chief representative of two great ideas—civil liberty and "a pure *spiritual* Christianity"—was "divinely commissioned to be, in a peculiar sense, his brother's keeper. Add to this the fact of his rapidly increasing strength in modern times, and we have well-nigh a demonstration of his destiny." God, it appeared to Mr. Strong, was training this favored race for the final competition of races—the struggle for existence—which would arise from the continued pressure of population upon the means of subsistence.

Then this race of unequaled energy, with all the majesty of numbers and the might of wealth behind it—the representative, let us hope, of the largest liberty, the purest Christianity, the highest civilization—having developed peculiarly aggressive traits calculated to impress its institutions upon mankind, will spread itself over the earth. If I read not amiss, this powerful race will move down upon Mexico, down upon Central and South America, out upon the islands of the sea, over upon Africa and beyond. And can any one doubt that the result of this competition of races will be the "survival of the fittest"?

The extinction of weaker races before the all-conquering Anglo-Saxon might appear sad to some, but to Mr. Strong it seemed almost inevitable. Only adverse climatic conditions could hold the Anglo-Saxon in check, and the areas where he could not thrive were not extensive. "Is there room for reasonable doubt," he asked in conclusion, "that this race, unless devitalized by alcohol and tobacco, is destined to dispossess many weaker races, assimilate others, and mold the remainder, until, in a very true and important sense, it has Anglo-Saxonized mankind?"⁸

The reader may be tempted to attribute the rather sophomoric generalizations and prophecies of Fiske and Strong to their lack of broad and systematic scholarly training. Yet one of their contemporaries who possessed these advantages to a degree unusual among American scholars of his time arrived by a different road at quite similar conclusions. Professor John W. Burgess, after completing his undergraduate work at Amherst, had spent two years in the study of

⁸ Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*, chap. xiv, pp. 208-227.

history and political science at Göttingen, Leipzig, and Berlin. Thence he returned to teach, first at Amherst and later at Columbia, where in 1880 he took a leading part in founding the School of Political Science.

It is significant that the two German scholars to whom Burgess acknowledged the heaviest debt were Gustav Droysen, historian of the rise of the Prussian state, and Rudolph von Gneist, profound student of the development of English constitutional law.⁹ Whether the admiration for the political talents of the Teutonic race which Burgess must have derived from study under these men was strengthened by an acquaintance with Count Arthur Gobineau's work on the superiority of the Nordic stock can only be conjectured.¹⁰ In any event, his most ambitious work, *Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law*, published in 1890, contains a remarkable chapter on "National Political Character," in which Burgess virtually assigned world dominion to Germans and Anglo-Saxons.¹¹

After analyzing the political character of Greek, Slav, Celt, Roman, and Teuton as exhibited in their political institutions, Burgess concluded that all but the last were deficient in the highest political talent. The successes of Greek, Celt, and Slav had been confined to the organization of local communities; the genius of the Roman was for world empire. Only Teutons had developed the true national state, which was, in Burgess's opinion, "the most modern and the most complete solution of the whole problem of political organization which the world has as yet produced." The fact that the national state was a Teutonic creation stamped the Teutonic nations "as the political nations *par excellence*, and authorize[d] them, in the economy of the world to assume the leadership in the establishment and administration of states."¹²

Having thus assigned the Teutons to their proper place in the hierarchy of races, Burgess proceeded, in the next chapter, to draw

⁹ John W. Burgess, *Reminiscences of an American Scholar*, pp. 126, 131.

¹⁰ Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (4 vols., Paris, 1853-1855) was translated into English with the title *Moral and Intellectual Diversity of Races* (Philadelphia, 1856).

¹¹ John W. Burgess, *Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law*, I, 30-39.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 39.

certain "conclusions of practical politics."¹³ It followed easily from what had been said,

that the Teutonic nations are particularly endowed with the capacity for establishing national states, and are especially called to that work; and, therefore, that they are intrusted, in the general economy of history, with the mission of conducting the political civilization of the modern world.¹⁴

This meant, among other things,¹⁵ that the Teutonic nations were "called to carry the political civilization of the modern world into those parts of the world inhabited by unpolitical and barbaric races; *i.e., they must have a colonial policy.*"¹⁶ To North Americans, who were reluctant to undertake such responsibility and inclined to regard it as "unwarrantable interference in the affairs of other states," Burgess pointed out that

by far the larger part of the surface of the globe is inhabited by populations which have not succeeded in establishing civilized states; which have, in fact, no capacity to accomplish such a work; and which must, therefore, remain in a state of barbarism or semi-barbarism, unless the political nations undertake the work of state organization for them. This condition of things authorizes the political nations not only to answer the call of the unpolitical populations for aid and direction, but also to force organization upon them by any means necessary, in their honest judgment, to accomplish this result. There is no human right to the status of barbarism.¹⁷

To justify such interference in the interests of civilization, it was not necessary that the inferior race be wholly barbaric. In the case of

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-48.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹⁵ Of some modern interest are Burgess's conclusions as to the proper attitude of the Teutonic rulers to alien elements within their own borders. In a state with heterogeneous population, he wrote, "the Teutonic element, when dominant, should never surrender the balance of political power, either in general or local organization, to the other elements. Under certain circumstances it should not even permit participation of the other elements in political power . . . the participation of other ethnical elements in the exercise of political power has resulted, and will result, in corruption and confusion most deleterious and dangerous to the rights of all, and to the civilization of society." *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45. Burgess was likely thinking of the South during the carpet-bag régime. The passage might, however, have been taken as a text by the rulers of the Third Reich.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45. Italics mine.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

populations "not wholly barbaric, which have made some progress in state organizations, but which manifest incapacity to solve the problem of political civilization with any degree of completeness," interference by the political nations would be justifiable.

No one can question that it is in the interest of the world's civilization that law and order and the true liberty consistent therewith shall reign everywhere upon the globe. A permanent inability on the part of any state or semi-state to secure this status is a threat to civilization everywhere. Both for the sake of the half-barbarous state and in the interest of the rest of the world, a state or states, endowed with the capacity for political organization, may righteously assume sovereignty over, and undertake to create state order for, such a politically incompetent population.

To undertake such interference was not only a right but an obligation. "Indifference on the part of Teutonic states to the political civilization of the rest of the world is, then, not only mistaken policy, but disregard of duty."¹⁸

Modern imperialism could ask for no more sweeping justification than Professor Burgess gave it. To a reviewer in the *Nation* this portion of Burgess's work seemed a surprising endorsement of "the political morality of Omar and Pizarro." "The war-cry of the modern State," remarked this writer, "is not 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon,' it is true, but it conquers in the name of its 'world-duty,' which is practically the same thing."¹⁹ It is little wonder that, as Burgess complained later, his discussion of the colonial question was widely condemned in Continental Europe and in America "as a justification of the existing system of British colonial empire and of its farther extension in Asia and Africa, if not elsewhere, as a permanent world condition. The British publicists," he remarked naively,

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48. It is interesting to compare portions of the above passage with language subsequently used by one of Burgess's students at Columbia. In his annual message of December 6, 1904, President Theodore Roosevelt wrote, with reference to the Dominican Republic: "If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, . . ." *Congressional Record*, 58th Cong., 3d sess., p. 19. This was, of course, part of the famous Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.

¹⁹ *Nation*, LIII, 240 (September 24, 1891).

understood me better and defended this part of my book with distinct appreciation."²⁰ Why, one may ask, should they have done otherwise?

It may be remarked here, parenthetically, as a curious fact, that when in 1898 the United States embarked upon a war which led directly to the assumption of a portion of the "world-duty" which Burgess had held before its eyes, he himself heatedly opposed that course. The war with Spain was to him "the first great shock" that he had experienced since the founding of the School of Political Science, which he had looked upon as an agency for international peace. The atrocity stories which preceded the war he set down as the insidious work of British statesmen, who wished to embroil the United States in a war with Spain; and the extension of American authority over subject peoples he regarded as "disastrous to American political civilization" and as "a fatal move . . . bound to reach farther and finally compromise the liberties of all American citizens."²¹ Burgess apparently saw no inconsistency between this attitude and his earlier advocacy of a colonial policy. To the student any attempt to reconcile the two seems hopeless.

From Burgess, who planted the seed of an expansionist policy only to abjure the ripened fruit, we may turn to a philosopher whose thought on this subject was consistent and who never shrank from the responsibilities which his ideas entailed for his country. In the same year in which Burgess's treatise on political science saw the light there also appeared *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, by Alfred Thayer Mahan, at that time a captain in the United States Navy. The embodiment of a series of lectures on naval history which Mahan had been detailed to give at the Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island, the volume put forth the thesis which Mahan was further to illustrate and defend through the remainder of his active life. This thesis was, in short, that sea power was the most potent factor in the making or breaking of nations, that without sea power no people, however gifted, had attained or could attain the fullest measure of well-being or of influence and importance in world affairs. This volume, which told the story of the rise of British sea power in the years from 1660 to 1783, was followed by others which

²⁰ Burgess, *Reminiscences*, p. 249.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 312-316.

carried the narrative to the close of the Napoleonic wars, with excursions into other periods and into the naval history of the United States.²²

But Mahan was always the preacher as well as the historian. What he perhaps had most at heart, and what certainly most concerns us here, was his indoctrination of his own countrymen with the gospel of sea power. A patriotic American, he wished to see his nation profit by the lessons which he had discovered in history and which he drove home at every opportunity, in his books and in the numerous articles which he contributed to American periodicals.

The history of sea power, wrote Mahan in 1890, embraces "in its broad sweep all that tends to make a people great upon the sea or by the sea."²³ While it is "largely a military history," its fundamental significance is economic. Sea power exists chiefly for the sake of commerce; it includes all that goes to make sea-borne commerce secure and profitable—a merchant marine, that trade may not be in alien hands; a navy capable of defending the merchant marine and keeping the trade routes open in time of war; colonies, which may both serve the interests of commerce directly and also provide naval vessels with secure bases and coaling stations the world over.

These things, in Mahan's mind, were the essential foundations of national prosperity and national greatness. How desperate to him, in 1890, must have appeared the prospects of his own country! There was, indeed, a growing foreign trade, but it was carried in ships flying alien flags. There was the beginning—a very feeble beginning—of a modern navy. A dozen light cruisers were built or being built as well as the two second-class battleships, "Maine" and "Texas"; and in the year of the publication of *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, Congress authorized the construction of three first-class battleships. These small beginnings did not impress Mahan. Without a great merchant marine, of which he saw little prospect, he doubted whether an adequate navy would or could be built.

Even had the United States a great national shipping, it may be doubted whether a sufficient navy would follow; the distance which

²² For a partial bibliography of Mahan's writings see C. C. Taylor, *The Life of Admiral Mahan, Naval Philosopher*, pp. 336-338.

²³ *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*, p. 1.

separates her from other great powers, in one way a protection, is also a snare.²⁴

As for colonies, which "afford . . . the surest means of supporting abroad the sea power of a country,"—

Such colonies the United States has not and is not likely to have. . . . Having therefore no foreign establishments, either colonial or military, the ships of war of the United States, in war, will be like land birds, unable to fly far from their own shores. To provide resting-places for them, where they can coal and repair, would be one of the first duties of a government proposing to itself the development of the power of the nation at sea.²⁵

But Mahan was not without hope for the future. For a quarter of a century, it is true, America had turned her eyes inward, away from the sea—an attitude which, in the historian's mind had spelled disaster for France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²⁶ There were signs now, however, that the nation might be forced to "the turning of the eyes outward, instead of inward only, to seek the welfare of the country." The growing productivity of its farms and factories would compel a search for foreign markets and induce relations to the world "radically distinct from the simple idea of self-sufficingness." The competition for markets and colonies being carried on by the seaboard powers of Europe, especially the aggressiveness shown of late by Germany in the Pacific, in Africa, in South America, might bring those powers into collision with the United States; had, in fact, already done so in the recent Samoan complication. The prospective piercing of the Isthmus of Panama, which would be, "nothing but a disaster to the United States, in the present state of her military and naval preparation"; the unsettled political conditions prevalent in Haiti, Central America, and the Hawaiian Islands, places of great military or commercial importance, whose control might be productive of international quarrels—all these things might perhaps jar the United States from her wonted complacency, might lead her to "look outward" and to build up her sea power.²⁷

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

²⁷ Mahan, "The United States Looking Outward," *Atlantic Monthly*, December, 1890, reprinted in *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future*, pp. 3-27.

In preparation for the day when such a change of attitude should come about, Mahan sketched the outlines of a program. In addition to constructing a modern navy and adequate coast defenses, the United States must be ready to take, when opportunity offered, such outlying positions as would confer mastery of the essential water routes. Of preeminent importance, when the isthmian canal should have been opened, would be the control of the Caribbean. Upon such control would depend freedom of interoceanic transit. What, then, were the necessary measures?

Control of a maritime region is insured primarily by a navy; secondarily, by positions, suitably chosen and spaced one from the other, upon which as bases the navy rests, and from which it can exert its strength. At present the positions of the Caribbean are occupied by foreign powers, nor may we, however disposed to acquisition, obtain them by means other than righteous; but a distinct advance will have been made when public opinion is convinced that we need them, and should not exert our utmost ingenuity to dodge them when flung at our head.²⁸

Next to the ~~isthmus~~ and the Caribbean area, Mahan was concerned with the Pacific. That ocean was destined to be the scene not only of a thriving commerce but of a gigantic struggle of races, civilizations, and religions—of Orient against Occident. The day was approaching “when the vast mass of China—now inert—[might] yield to one of those impulses which have in past ages buried civilization under a wave of barbaric invasion. The great armies of Europe, whose existence is so frequently deplored, may be providentially intended as a barrier to that great movement, if it come.” But China might “burst her barriers eastward as well as westward, toward the Pacific as well as toward the European Continent”; in that event, to be confronted not by the armies of Europe but, God willing, by the navy of the United States.

Whate’er betide, Sea Power will play in those days the leading part which it has in all history, and the United States by her geographical position must be one of the frontiers from which, as from a base of operations, the Sea Power of the civilized world will energize.²⁹

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103 (from “The Isthmus and Sea Power,” originally published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1893).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32 (letter to *New York Times*, January 30, 1893); pp. 123-124 (from “Possibilities of an Anglo-American Reunion,” *North American Review*,

In that approaching Armageddon, the United States would need not only the unobstructed use of the isthmian canal, but outposts in the Pacific as well, and the most logical outpost was in the Hawaiian Islands. As early as 1890 Mahan had remarked that for the defense of the west coast it was essential that no foreign power should acquire a lodgment in those islands.³⁰ Three years later he predicted that the outcome of the contest between East and West in the Pacific might be determined by "a firm hold of the Sandwich Islands by a great, civilized, maritime power," and that the United States was "naturally indicated as the proper guardian for this most important position."³¹

While Mahan's arguments for expansion looked primarily to the national interest, he did not hesitate to identify that interest with the welfare of the world at large. With her frontage on the Pacific, the United States stood guard over the preservation of Western civilization. But it was her rôle not only to defend but to extend the blessings of that civilization. "How much poorer would the world have been," he exclaimed, "had Englishmen heeded the cautious hesitancy that now binds us reject every advance beyond our shore-lines!"³² Indeed, such a policy of beneficent expansion seemed to him a part of divine destiny. When one reflects, he wrote, upon the chains of accidents by which Great Britain had taken and held both Gibraltar and Jamaica,—

one marvels whether incidents so widely separated in time and place, all tending towards one end—the maritime predominance of Great Britain—can be accidents, or are simply the exhibition of a Personal Will, acting through all time, with purpose deliberate and consecutive, to ends not yet discerned.³³

Even more than Burgess's, Mahan's message seemed to sound the battle-cry: "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!"

The basic ideas of all these men—Darwin, Fiske, Strong, Burgess, and Mahan—were in current circulation at the beginning of the 1890's, though Mahan's thesis was broadened as the decade advanced. In 1894 appeared another contribution to the new expansionist

November, 1894). The "yellow peril" idea was more fully elaborated in "A Twentieth Century Outlook," *Harper's Magazine*, September, 1897. See *infra*, chap. vi, p. 222.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 50.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 307-308.

philosophy in Benjamin Kidd's *Social Evolution*. Kidd, an English sociologist, belonged, like Fiske, to the Darwinian school and, also like Fiske, attempted to apply the Darwinian formula to society. The part of his book that concerns us here is a chapter dealing with the relation of the white man to the tropics.³⁴ In the near future, Kidd predicted, the European races were certain to have utilized all available agricultural lands in the temperate zone. It would then be imperative that, in the interest of the food supply, the immense resources of the tropics should be developed. But since it was evident that the native peoples of the tropics had not the requisite "social efficiency" to insure such development, it would be necessary for the more efficient races (preeminently the Anglo-Saxons) to take control. The spirit of altruism and social responsibility which, since the Reformation, had developed to a high degree in England, was a guarantee that such Anglo-Saxon control would be exercised not for purposes of human exploitation but for the common good. The partition of Africa seemed to Kidd evidence that Europe realized the future importance of the tropics. In the western hemisphere—where Haiti and the Central American states were cited as horrible examples of "social inefficiency"—the same realization might be perceived,

even in the United States, where the necessity for the future predominance of the influence of the English-speaking peoples over the American Continents is already recognised by a kind of national instinct that may be expected to find clearer expression as time goes on.³⁵

All of these writers contributed to the "intellectual climate" of the United States in the decade in which it inaugurated a program of overseas expansion. How far they influenced the popular thought of the period cannot, obviously, be determined with any high degree of exactitude. They were all, however, well known and widely read.

³⁴ Benjamin Kidd, *Social Evolution*, pp. 303-329.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 324. The thesis set forth in this chapter Kidd elaborated at greater length in his *The Control of the Tropics* (1898). Another application of the evolutionary concept to society, which has significance for this study is found in Professor Simon N. Patten's *The Theory of Social Forces* (supplement to *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*, VII, 1896). "The earth," he wrote (pp. 131-132), "has but one general environment and can bring to perfection but one type of man. Attempts to preserve lower types of men, or to bring them into organic relations with higher types, tend to make a society static and thus check its progress."

John Fiske's lectures on "American Political Ideas"—of which that on "Manifest Destiny" was the conclusion—were given orally many times in the United States. In print, they enjoyed a circulation as wide as that of *Harper's Magazine*; and they were subsequently published in book form. Fiske was, according to one reliable student of his career, "one of the most important intellectual influences in America in the last quarter of the nineteenth century."³⁶ Josiah Strong's volume, *Our Country*, had a circulation of 170,000 copies in English, besides being translated into several foreign languages.³⁷

Burgess's treatise was not written for popular consumption, but in the opinion of President Butler of Columbia University, it "made a most profound impression at the time of its publication, both in Europe and in the United States. It served as the basis of the lectures and interpretations which Professor Burgess gave at Columbia University for a generation to thousands of eager and interested students of law and political science."³⁸ Among these students was young Theodore Roosevelt, some of whose ideas bear more than a fancied resemblance to Burgess's teachings.³⁹ At least one newspaper cited Burgess's work in support of the annexation of Hawaii.⁴⁰

Of Mahan's influence upon his contemporaries there is no dearth of evidence. His books were widely noticed.⁴¹ Unlike the other

³⁶ Adams, *loc. cit.*

³⁷ *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, IX, 416-417.

³⁸ Nicholas Murray Butler's "Foreword" to John W. Burgess, *The Foundations of Political Science*, p. v. This volume is a reprinting of certain of the chapters of *Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law*, including those considered above. The republication was suggested by President Butler in 1917, in the hope that it might "be of commanding service for the guidance of public opinion when the issues of the great war . . . were presented for settlement upon its termination." *Ibid.* Professor Burgess relates that arrangements to that end were made with the publishers of the original work, but that the plan was suspended when a typesetter in the publishing establishment discovered that "everything done by the Germans in the present war found its justification in that book." *Reminiscences of an American Scholar*, pp. 256-257. The reprint was finally brought out in 1933 by the Columbia University Press. Professor Burgess died in January 1931.

³⁹ [Resemblance of Roosevelt Corollary previously noted—Ed.]

⁴⁰ *New York Commercial Advertiser*, February 11, 1893. For Burgess's influence on President Dole of Hawaii, see *infra*, chap. vi, note 8.

⁴¹ E. g., *Literary World*, XXI, 218 (July 5, 1890); *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, LXXXVII, 962 (November, 1893); *Political Science Quarterly*, IX, 171-173 (March, 1894).

writers, he addressed himself directly to the problems in hand, contributing to such periodicals as the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Forum*, the *North American Review*, *Harper's Magazine*, and *McClure's Magazine* articles urging naval preparedness, the annexation of Hawaii, the control of the Caribbean, and related policies.⁴² His arguments were repeatedly cited in Congress, by Henry Cabot Lodge and other expansionist Senators and Congressmen,⁴³ and printed in reports of Congressional committees.⁴⁴ Theodore Roosevelt reviewed his books with high appreciation,⁴⁵ praised his magazine articles,⁴⁶ and corresponded with him in regard to annexing Hawaii and the Virgin Islands.⁴⁷ Other expansionist publicists went to Mahan for their arguments.⁴⁸ To a British observer, on the eve of the Spanish-American War, it seemed that the spirit of America had been remade through Mahan's influence. Mahan's teaching, wrote "The Looker-on," in *Blackwood's*,

was as oil to the flame of "colonial expansion" everywhere leaping into life. Everywhere a new-sprung ambition to go forth and possess and enjoy read its sanction in the philosophy of history ennobled by the glory of conquest. . . . I doubt whether this effect of Mahan's teachings has gone deeper anywhere than in the United States.⁴⁹

Controvert as it may current fashions in historical interpretation, the observation must be made that the rise of an expansionist philosophy in the United States owed little to economic influences. Of the writers mentioned, only Mahan had much to say of expansion as an

⁴² See the thirteen essays, all published 1890 to 1899, collected in the two volumes, *The Interest of America in Sea Power, Present and Future*, and *Lessons of the War with Spain*.

⁴³ E. g., *Cong. Record*, 51st Cong., 2d sess., p. 1856; 53d Cong., 2d sess., pp. 1844-1849; 53d Cong., 3d sess., pp. 3082-3084, 3111, 3113. In not all of these speeches is Mahan mentioned by name, but in all the debt to his ideas is perfectly obvious.

⁴⁴ *Senate Report* No. 681, 55th Cong., 2d sess., p. 99.

⁴⁵ *Pol. Sci. Quart.*, IX, 171-173.

⁴⁶ H. C. Lodge (ed.), *Selections from the Correspondence of Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge*, I, 274.

⁴⁷ H. F. Pringle, *Theodore Roosevelt, a Biography*, pp. 171, 293.

⁴⁸ E. g., Lt. F. L. Winn, U. S. A., in *Overland Monthly*, XXIII, 496 (May, 1894); Truxton Beale, in *North American Review*, CLXVI, 760 (June, 1898).

⁴⁹ *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, CLXIII, 563-565 (April, 1898). For a recent appraisal of Mahan's influence, see L. M. Hacker, "The Incendiary Mahan: a Biography," *Scribner's Magazine*, XCV, 263-268, 311-320.

aid to commerce, and Mahan's ideas were derived from the study of history, not from my contemporary economic pressure. In fact, as will be shown later,⁵⁰ business interests in the United States were generally opposed to expansion, or indifferent to it, until after May 1, 1898. The need of American business for colonial markets and fields for investment was discovered not by business men but by historians and other intellectuals, by journalists and politicians.

Among the public men who espoused expansion largely in the supposed interest of trade was James G. Blaine, Secretary of State during three and one-quarter years of Benjamin Harrison's administration. In Congress, twenty years before, Blaine had predicted with approval the "expansion of our flag and our sovereignty over insular or continental possessions, north or south."⁵¹ But by the time of his first appointment as Secretary of State (under Garfield in 1881), his idea of expansion had, according to Professor Locky, "suffered a radical change." He had already begun to formulate his Pan-American policy, of which one of the chief purposes was, in his own words, "to cultivate such friendly, commercial relations with all American countries as would lead to a large increase in the export trade of the United States, by supplying fabrics in which we are abundantly able to compete with the manufacturing nations of Europe."⁵² Like President Hoover in later years, Blaine had come to realize that, in the words of Professor Locky, "territorial aggrandizement at the expense of the neighbors, whose friendship was essential to the success of that policy, was no longer to be thought of." Hence, assurances that the United States would scrupulously respect the independence and territorial integrity of its southern neighbors.⁵³

Yet the assumption of this attitude of friendliness and forbearance toward Latin America did not prevent Blaine from contemplating the eventual dominance of the United States in the Caribbean. He believed it essential to the welfare of the United States that there should be an isthmian canal under American control. His energetic efforts to secure, for that purpose, a modification of the Clayton-

⁵⁰ *Infra*, chap. vii.

⁵¹ Quoted by Joseph B. Locky, *James Gillespie Blaine*, in S. F. Bemis (ed.), *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy*, VIII, 116.

⁵² *Ibid.*, VII, 275.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, VIII, 116-117.

Bulwer Treaty are well known.⁵⁴ Cūba, because of its relation to the future canal and the Gulf trade, must never be permitted to pass out of the "American system." The actual possession of Cuba might not be necessary, or even desirable, he wrote in 1881;⁵⁵ yet ten years later he believed that the United States would one day need to annex both Cuba and Puerto Rico,⁵⁶ if not, indeed, all the West India islands.⁵⁷ That he was keenly interested in acquiring a naval base in the Caribbean we shall presently see.

Blaine showed no less interest in the Pacific than in the Caribbean. Like Mahan and others of his day, he saw in that ocean the great theater of American trade in the years to come. Two diverging lines, drawn from San Francisco to the Aleutian Islands and to Honolulu, would mark "the natural limit of the ocean belt within which our trade with the oriental countries must flow." The southern side of this triangle would be, moreover, "the direct line of communication between the United States and Australasia. Within this line lies the commercial domain of our western coast."⁵⁸ Hawaii, obviously, if held by a strong naval power, would dominate this area. Blaine considered it, like Cuba, a part of the American system, but because of both the actual existence of international rivalries in Hawaii, and its close cultural and commercial ties with the United States, he regarded the annexation of Hawaii as more natural and more imperative than the acquisition of Cuba. Should the maintenance of the independence of Hawaii prove impracticable, he wrote in 1881, the United States would "unhesitatingly meet the altered situation by seeking an avowedly American solution for the grave issues presented."⁵⁹ A decade later he wrote to President Harrison:

I think there are only three places that are of value enough to be taken; one is Hawaii and the others are Cuba and Porto Rico. Cuba and Porto Rico are not imminent and will not be for a generation.

⁵⁴ For a recent treatment of this subject see D. S. Muzzey, *James G. Blaine*, pp. 197-201. A standard account is in M. W. Williams, *Anglo-American Isthmian Diplomacy, 1815-1915*.

⁵⁵ *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1881*, p. 638. The volumes in this series will hereafter be cited in the abbreviated form, *U. S. For. Rel.* with the appropriate year.

⁵⁶ Muzzey, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

⁵⁷ C. C. Tansill, *The Purchase of the Danish West Indies*, p. 191.

⁵⁸ *U. S. For. Rel., 1881*, p. 636.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 639.

Hawaii may come up for decision at any unexpected hour, and I hope we shall be prepared to decide it in the affirmative.⁶⁰

Such was the man who, in March, 1889, became Harrison's first Secretary of State. To what extent Blaine shaped the foreign policy of the Harrison administration is difficult if not impossible to determine.⁶¹ Yet Harrison's foreign policy, so far as they concern us here, were in accord with ideas which Blaine had previously expressed. It seems safe to assume that in their desire to promote American interests and even American sovereignty in the Caribbean and the Pacific, Harrison, Blaine, and John W. Foster, who succeeded Blaine in June 1892, worked harmoniously.⁶² Whoever was chiefly responsible, the Harrison administration adopted an expansionist policy which, though barren of results, foreshadowed in its purposes the "large policy" of 1898.

No attempt will be made here to present in detail all the features of this policy, most of which have been treated in other studies. It is important, however, to view them in relation to one another.

In the settlement of the Samoan question—the first problem that confronted the new administration in the field of foreign relations—Harrison and Blaine succeeded in preserving the nominal independence of the islands under the tripartite protection of the United States, Germany, and Great Britain, and in safeguarding American rights at Pago-Pago under the treaty of 1878. Though Blaine was acclaimed for having taken a stronger tone than his Democratic predecessor and thus having brought Germany to terms, it has been

⁶⁰ Gail Hamilton (pseudonym for Mary Abigail Dodge), *Biography of James G. Blaine*, p. 692.

⁶¹ Cf. Prof. A. T. Volwiler's review of Muzzey's *James G. Blaine, in American Historical Review*, XLI, 554-557.

⁶² Two other men who are known to have been very close to Harrison and who may have influenced his foreign policy were Whitelaw Reid of the New York *Tribune*, an enthusiastic expansionist, and B. F. Tracy, Secretary of the Navy. Tracy was insistent upon a vigorous defense of American interests on the isthmus and in the Pacific. In his annual report for December, 1892, he complained that "the aggressive policy of foreign nations . . . has continued, and this country, whether it will or not, will soon be forced into a position where it cannot disregard measures which form a standing menace to its prosperity and security. On the Isthmus our commerce is engaged in a desperate fight to maintain its foothold. In the South Pacific repeated annexations and protectorates are extending the power and influence of the maritime states of the Old World. . . . *House Exec. Doc. No. 1, Pt. III, 52d Cong., 2d Sess., p. 37.*

shown that he found the German Government disposed toward a reasonable compromise and that he did, in fact, little more than push ahead to a settlement along lines already sketched by Bayard.⁶³ That Harrison, at any rate, did not consider the Samoan question as one of first magnitude we may perhaps infer from the conservative tone of editorials on the subject in the New York *Tribune*, which, in the hands of Harrison's friend Whitelaw Reid, may almost be considered an administration organ. Samoa, according to the *Tribune*, lay "entirely outside the circle of American interests." It might well be a matter of concern to Australia and New Zealand, but not to us.

There has been a scramble for territorial acquisition in that quarter during the last decade, England, France, and Germany having either coveted or seized one island after another. America ought not to compete with those powers in rivalries that lie outside of its own sphere of activity.⁶⁴

Not in the Samoan incident are the evidences of a new policy to be found, but in the administration's attitude to the canal question, to the Caribbean, and to Hawaii.

A treaty negotiated by Secretary Frelinghuysen with Nicaragua in December, 1884, had, in plain disregard of the restrictions of the

⁶³ For several recent accounts of the Samoan affair see Muzzey, *op. cit.*, pp. 394-402; G. H. Ryden, *The Foreign Policy of the United States in Relation to Samoa*; Alice Felt Tyler, *The Foreign Policy of James G. Blaine*, chap. ix.

⁶⁴ N. Y. *Tribune*, January 11, January 18, 1889. After the disastrous hurricane of March, 1889, however, the *Tribune* insisted upon retention of all American rights in the land-locked harbor of Pago-Pago. "Pago-Pago should neither be neglected nor surrendered, but intelligently and sagaciously utilized." *Ibid.*, March 31, 1889. While the Samoan incident is not particularly significant as an indication of the new administration's policy, it did call forth, in Congress and the press, some expressions which give an interesting foretaste of the expansionist talk which was to be heard in the next ten years. Senator Frye, of Maine, asserted that Pago-Pago was destined to be of the most vital importance to the commerce of the United States in the South Pacific. *Cong. Record*, 50th Cong., 2d sess., pp. 108, 1374. Senator Dolph, of Oregon, and Mr. G. H. Bates, invoked the Monroe Doctrine for the protection of Samoa against European covetousness. *Ibid.*, pp. 1325-1337. G. H. Bates, "Some Aspects of the Samoan Question," *Century Magazine*, XV, 945-949. Mr. U. S. Eddy, member of a New York exporting firm, declared that American policy in Samoa had "created a profound impression in Europe, where it was rightly regarded as the indication of a changed attitude." The United States, he thought, was "about to begin an aggressive movement in the campaign of commerce." U. S. Eddy, "Our Chance for Commercial Supremacy," *Forum*, XI, 419-428.

Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, proposed to give to the United States exclusive rights in the construction and control of a Nicaraguan canal.⁶⁵ This treaty had not been acted upon by the Senate and had been withdrawn by Cleveland in December, 1885. The project of a Nicaraguan canal to rival the French canal under construction at Panama had then been taken up by American capitalists and promoters, who on February 20, 1889, secured from Congress a charter under the name of the Maritime Canal Company of Nicaragua.⁶⁶ But as the company met with difficulty in raising the money, the proposal arose to have the United States guarantee the bonds of the company and in return receive possession of all or a majority of the stock, thus securing indirectly, as the principal stockholder in the corporation, that control over the canal which, by the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, it was estopped from securing directly.⁶⁷ To this scheme, certainly contrary to the spirit if not to the letter of the nation's treaty obligations, Harrison gave his cordial support, expressing the opinion, in December, 1891, that the completion of the canal was "a matter of the highest concern to the United States."⁶⁸ A year later he again recommended that Congress give "prompt and adequate support" to the Maritime Canal Company, and added:

It is impossible to overstate the value from every standpoint of this great enterprise, and I hope that there may be time, even in this Congress, to give to it an impetus that will insure the early completion of the canal and *secure to the United States its proper relation to it when completed.*⁶⁹

Whether the isthmus was to be pierced by an American canal at Nicaragua or a French canal at Panama, the control of the approaches to it was a matter of vital importance to the United States, and no sooner had Captain Mahan begun publishing his admoni-

⁶⁵ P. M. Brown, *Frederick T. Frelinghuysen*, in Bemis, *op. cit.*, VIII, 30-31.

⁶⁶ *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XXV, 673-675. J. B. Henderson, *American Diplomatic Questions*, pp. 75-101. There is a MS Master's thesis, *The Maritime Canal Company of Nicaragua*, by Margaret Stern Wilkinson, in the University of Buffalo Library.

⁶⁷ *Cong. Record*, 51st Cong., 2d sess., p. 1123. See *Senate Report*, No. 1944, 51st Cong., 2d sess., a report from the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, January 10, 1891, recommending the government guarantee of the bonds.

⁶⁸ James D. Richardson (ed.), *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, IX, 189.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 317. Italics mine.

tions upon this subject, than the Harrison administration was fishing in the troubled waters of the Caribbean with that object in view. The first opportunity to present itself was in Haiti, where a new president, Hyppolite, had come into power encumbered with certain supposed obligations to the United States. Frederick Douglass was sent as minister to Haiti, evidently with verbal instructions to press upon Hyppolite the mutual advantages to be derived from a lease of Môle St. Nicholas to the United States for a naval station; and when Hyppolite proved obstinate, Harrison dispatched Rear Admiral Gherardi as a special envoy to assist Douglass. Gherardi was instructed to point out to Hyppolite that the presence of a part of the United States fleet in Haitian waters would "be equivalent to a guaranty of the autonomy and independence of the Haytian government without any treaty relations which might appear as a subordination of one Republic to the other."⁷⁰ Gherardi went even further than this, promising the Haitian foreign minister the protection of the United States against any attempts at revolution that might be provoked by a grant of the coveted lease.⁷¹ Unable to convince the Haitian government with these arguments, Gherardi suggested to Blaine that the United States might seize Môle St. Nicholas in order to "relieve the Haitian government of responsibility and embarrassment."⁷²

The drastic policy suggested by Admiral Gherardi was not followed. Instead, the Washington government turned to the Dominican Republic, where Samana Bay presented a site for a naval base equally eligible with Môle St. Nicholas. In opening negotiations for a reciprocity treaty in May, 1891, the Dominican minister in Washington let it be known that he was empowered also to negotiate a lease for such part of Samana Bay as the United States might need for a naval station. As negotiations proceeded, President Heureaux intimated that he would need a cash payment of \$200,000 immediately upon the execution of the treaty, in order to suppress possible armed opposition to such an infringement of Dominican sovereignty.

⁷⁰ Tyler, *op. cit.*, p. 94. The whole incident is treated in *ibid.*, pp. 91-98. See also Frederick Douglass, "Haiti and the United States: Inside History of the Negotiations for the Môle St. Nicholas," *North American Review*, CLIII, 337-345, 450-459 (Sept., Oct., 1891).

⁷¹ Tyler, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97, note 22, citing Gherardi to Blaine, February 9, 1891, MS *Dispatches, Haiti*, XXV.

This information was made known confidentially to the proper committees of Congress, and that body incorporated in the Sundry Civil Appropriation Bill of August 5, 1892, an item of \$250,000 "for providing coaling and naval stations, . . . to be expended under direction of the President."⁷³ A convention was drawn up providing for a lease to the United States for 99 years, renewable for a like period, of the island of Carenero in Samana Bay, with free use and occupancy of the waters and shores of the bay and the right to erect any necessary defenses, the United States to pay \$250,000 within thirty days, \$50,000 annually for five years, and \$25,000 annually thereafter.

Unhappily for the success of the plan, rumors of what was afoot leaked out, and their reverberations in the Dominican Republic compelled Heuraux to break off negotiations. Subsequent efforts to secure action, in Secretary Foster's words, met with "delays, subterfuges, and broken promises."⁷⁴

Môle St. Nicholas and Samana Bay did not exhaust the list of possible naval bases in the Caribbean. In the summer of 1891, certain Danish officials sounded the United States minister to Denmark, Mr. C. E. Carr, upon the possibility of reviving Seward's old project—the sale of the islands of St. Thomas and St. John to the United States.⁷⁵ Upon receipt of Carr's report, Blaine wrote Harrison that he was opposed to this purchase until the United States should be in possession of the larger islands, since the Danish islands lacked both commercial and strategic importance and would be difficult to defend. "They are destined to become ours," he wrote, "but among the last of the West Indies that would be taken."⁷⁶

Blaine's refusal may have been due to the fact that at this time the prospects of obtaining Samana Bay seemed good. When Carr brought the matter anew to Foster's attention in the fall of 1892,

⁷³ *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XXVII, 349.

⁷⁴ Memorandum by Secretary John W. Foster, February 23, 1893, accompanied by copies of the proposed treaty. *Miscellaneous Letters, 1893*, Department of State. Before becoming Secretary of State in June, 1892, Foster had been in charge of the reciprocity negotiations authorized by the McKinley Tariff act of 1890. (W. R. Castle, Jr., *John Watson Foster*, in Bemis, *op. cit.*, VIII, 191). Apparently he had handled the negotiations with the Dominican Republic from start to finish. There is an excellent account of this episode in Sumner Welles, *Naboth's Vineyard*, I, 468-495.

⁷⁵ Tansill, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 191. Blaine to Harrison, August 10, 1891. Gail Hamilton, *loc. cit.*

he found Foster friendly to the idea but doubtful whether the transaction could be consummated before March 4, 1893, when the Harrison régime would terminate. Foster wrote Carr:

The question of the acquisition of the Islands is one of far-reaching importance, the extent of which is appreciated by no one more than the President. As his administration is, however, drawing to its close, he considers it inadvisable to express any views or indicate any policy, the consummation of which he could not effect.⁷⁷

Thus the Harrison administration was fated to pass into history without having materially strengthened the position of the United States in the Caribbean. Its purposes, however, now that the facts are revealed, are clear enough.

There is very good reason for believing [wrote a reporter for the *Washington Star*, February 1, 1893] that if he [Harrison] had been re-elected an aggressive foreign policy would have been the most marked feature of his administration and that the end of another four years would have found this country in possession of strong points of advantage, from a naval point of view, in the South Atlantic and in the Pacific, placing us in a position both to foster and protect American commerce and to check foreign aggression in this hemisphere.

This seems like an accurate characterization. It was called forth, however, by the arrival of the news that a revolution in Hawaii had overthrown the royal government and that the United States would be invited to annex the islands. Thus, thought the *Star* reporter, there was even yet a chance that what Harrison had failed to accomplish in the Caribbean he might be able to achieve in the Pacific before laying down the cares of office.

Upon Harrison's Hawaiian policy, the subject of much writing but little real understanding, we must now dwell at considerable length.

⁷⁷ Foster to Carr, December 20, 1892. Tansill, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

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PART VII

VOICES IN RESPECTFUL
PROTEST

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JOHN D. HICKS

THE PERIOD of the 1890's has been called "the watershed of American history." Behind lay decades of expansion when the unexploited wealth of the country waited free for the asking of enterprising men; in the future would come the test of the nation's ability to conserve and distribute wisely its dwindling assets. While the philosophy of rugged individualism continued to characterize a good deal of business activity, the realization that pioneer virtues were hardly suitable to a complex industrial society was producing the first gestures of public regulation. The Jeffersonian idea that a small government of limited power was the best defense of individual liberties lingered tenaciously, but began to give way to an increased confidence in the ability of democratic government to defend the rights of the weaker members of society.

What was true for the nation as a whole had special meaning for the agricultural population. The census report of 1890 declaring the end of an official frontier represented the cold fact that farmers could no longer turn to the free land which had been the traditional remedy for their ills. In an economy increasingly dominated by industrial interests, the farmers considered themselves forgotten, a minority fragment associated more with the past than the present. Yet the means of salvation which they sought to employ through the Populist party forecast the future. The grievances were old, but the program of government intervention was new.

For many years it was as difficult for historians to appraise cor-

rectly the significance of these new trends in American life as it was for politicians. The program of the Populist party, calling for regulated currency, even for the public ownership of railroads, appeared to come not from grass-roots agrarianism but from European radicalism. The supporters of William Jennings Bryan were characterized as revolutionists rather than as reformers, more deserving of jail sentences than of terms in office. When the Populist party disintegrated, many conservatives hailed the passing of a pernicious and sinister force in American politics.

Such misconceptions need not be shared by anyone to whom John D. Hicks's definitive study of the Populist movement, which appeared in 1931, is available. Tracing the source of the movement to specific economic grievances rather than to foreign ideologies, Hicks follows the course of the farmers' protest from the feeble Alliances of the 1880's to the years of decline following fusion with the Democrats in the "free silver" campaign of 1896. Where others saw an early effort to collectivize the national economy. Hicks detects the complaint of small business striving to maintain itself while retaining an essentially individualistic philosophy. Some critics did recognize the traditional pattern of the protest, but failed to assign any value to the Populists' program. In the final chapter of his book Hicks shows how virtually every reform demanded by the Populist party subsequently made its way into the platforms of the major parties and then into legislation passed before Franklin Roosevelt took office.

As a description of the agricultural opposition to the industrialists' dictation in business and government, Hicks's study is both exhaustive and accurate. Its deficiencies lie in its omissions, chiefly in its failure to emphasize sufficiently the relation of the Populist party and its principles to the more general Progressive movement of the quarter century before the First World War. For example, the Democrats' repudiation of Grover Cleveland in 1896 showed the strength of the farmers' group, but resulted also from the urban opposition represented by Governor John

Altgeld, the liberal governor of Illinois. In relating the ultimate success of Populist demands, Hicks does not make clear that they were effectuated because they were so widely shared by nonfarming elements. Bryan failed as a presidential candidate, but became Secretary of State for Woodrow Wilson, who had been the reform governor of an industrial state.

Perhaps it may be argued with equal truth that for Hicks to have given more attention to the other reform movements of the period would have been to suggest interrelations which did not exist. The Populist party represented an unsuccessful rather than a successful fusion of labor and agrarian demands. Subsequent years witnessed the effectual union of discontented groups that the 1890's failed to achieve.

In any event, John D. Hicks's *The Populist Revolt* takes its place on any shelf of highly recommended readings in American history.

The Populist Contribution

EARLY in 1890, when the People's party was yet in the embryo stage, a farmer editor from the West set forth the doctrine that "cranks always win." As he saw it,

The cranks are those who do not accept the existing order of things, and propose to change them. The existing order of things is always accepted by the majority, therefore the cranks are always in the minority. They are always progressive thinkers and always in advance of their time, and they always win. Called fanatics and fools at first, they are sometimes persecuted and abused. But their reforms are generally righteous, and time, reason and argument bring men to their

From *The Populist Revolt* by John D. Hicks, by permission of the University of Minnesota Press.

side. Abused and ridiculed, then tolerated, then respectfully given a hearing, then supported. This has been the gauntlet that all great reforms and reformers have run, from Galileo to John Brown.¹

The writer of this editorial may have overstated his case, but a backward glance at the history of Populism shows that many of the reforms that the Populists demanded, while despised and rejected for a season, won triumphantly in the end. The party itself did not survive, nor did many of its leaders, although the number of contemporary politicians whose escutcheons should bear the bend sinister of Populism is larger than might be supposed; but doctrines showed an amazing vitality.

In formulating their principles the Populists reasoned that the ordinary, honest, willing American worker, be he farmer or be he laborer, might expect in this land of opportunity not only the chance to work but also, as the rightful reward of his labor, a fair degree of prosperity. When, in the later eighties and in the "heart-breaking nineties," hundreds of thousands—perhaps millions—of men found themselves either without work to do or, having work, unable to pay their just debts and make a living, the Populists held that there must be "wrong and crime and fraud somewhere." What was more natural than to fix the blame for this situation upon the manufacturers, the railroads, the money-lenders, the middlemen—plutocrats all, whose "colossal fortunes, unprecedented in the history of mankind," grew ever greater while the multitudes came to know the meaning of want. Work was denied when work might well have been given, and "the fruits of the toil of millions were boldly stolen."²

And the remedy? In an earlier age the hard-pressed farmers and laborers might have fled to free farms in the seemingly limitless lands of the West, but now the era of free lands had passed. Where, then, might they look for help? Where, if not to the government, which alone had the power to bring the mighty oppressors of the people to bay? So to the government the Populists turned. From it they asked laws to insure a full redress of grievances. As Dr. Turner

¹ *Farmers' Alliance* (Lincoln), February 15, 1890. This chapter follows in the main an article on "The Persistence of Populism," *Minnesota History*, 12:3-20 (March, 1931).

² Donnelly's preamble to the St. Louis and Omaha platforms stated not un- fairly the Populist protest.

puts it, "the defences of the pioneer democrat began to shift from free land to legislation, from the ideal of individualism to the ideal of social control through regulation by law."³ Unfortunately, however, the agencies of government had been permitted to fall into the hands of the plutocrats. Hence, if the necessary corrective legislation were to be obtained, the people must first win control of their government. The Populist philosophy thus boiled down finally to two fundamental propositions; one, that the government must restrain the selfish tendencies of those who profited at the expense of the poor and needy; the other, that the people, not the plutocrats, must control the government.

In their efforts to remove all restrictions on the power of the people to rule, the Populists accepted as their own a wide range of reforms. They believed, and on this they had frequently enough the evidence of their own eyes, that corruption existed at the ballot box and that in a fair count was often denied. They fell in line, therefore, with great enthusiasm when agitators, who were not necessarily Populists, sought to popularize the Australian ballot and such other measures as were calculated to insure a true expression of the will of the people.⁴ Believing as they did that the voice of the people was the voice of God, they sought to eliminate indirect elections, especially the election of United States senators by state legislatures and of the president and the vice president by an electoral college. Fully aware of the habits of party bosses in manipulating nominating conventions, the Populists veered more and more in the direction of direct primary elections, urging in some of their later platforms that nominations even for president and vice president should be made by direct vote. Woman suffrage was a delicate question, for it was closely identified with the politically hazardous matter of temperance legislation, but, after all, the idea of votes for women was so clearly in harmony with the Populist doctrine of popular rule that it could not logically be denied a place among genuinely Populistic reforms. Direct legislation through the initiative and referendum and through the easy

³ Turner, *Frontier in American History*, 277.

⁴ At St. Louis in December, 1889, the Northern Alliance demanded the Australian system of voting. Thereafter nearly every Alliance or Populist platform gave the subject favorable mention.

amendment of state constitutions naturally appealed strongly to the Populists—the more so as they saw legislatures fail repeatedly to enact reform laws to which a majority of their members had been definitely pledged. “A majority of the people,” said the Sioux Falls convention, “can never be corruptly influenced.”⁵ The recall of faithless officials, even judges, also attracted favorable attention from the makers of later Populist platforms.

To list these demands is to cite the chief political innovations made in the United States during recent times. The Australian system of voting, improved registration laws, and other devices for insuring “a free ballot and a fair count” have long since swept the country. Woman suffrage has won an unqualified victory. The election of United States senators by direct vote of the people received the approval of far more than two-thirds of the national House of Representatives as early as 1898; it was further foreshadowed by the adoption, beginning in 1904, of senatorial primaries in a number of states, the results of which were to be regarded as morally binding upon the legislatures concerned; and it became a fact in 1913 with the ratification of the seventeenth amendment to the constitution.

The direct election of president and vice president was a reform hard to reconcile with state control of election machinery and state definition of the right to vote. Hence this reform never made headway; but the danger of one presidential candidate receiving a majority of the popular vote and another a majority of the electoral vote, as was the case in the Cleveland-Harrison contest of 1888, seems definitely to have passed. Recent elections may not prove that the popular voice always speaks intelligently; but they do seem to show that it speaks decisively.

In the widespread use of the primary election for the making of party nominations, the Populist principle of popular rule has scored perhaps its most telling victory. Tillman urged this reform in South Carolina at a very early date, but on obtaining control of the Democratic political machine of his state, he hesitated to give up the power that the convention system placed in his hands. At length, however, in 1896 he allowed the reform to go through.⁶

⁵ See Stanwood, *History of the Presidency*, 2:39-42, for the Sioux Falls platform.

⁶ Simkins, *Tillman Movement*, 239-243.

Wisconsin, spurred on by the La Follette forces, adopted the direct primary plan of nominations in 1903, and thereafter the other states of the Union, with remarkably few exceptions, fell into line. Presidential preference primaries, through which it was hoped that the direct voice of the people could be heard in the making of nominations for president and vice president, were also adopted by a number of states, beginning with Oregon in 1910.

Direct legislation by the people became almost an obsession with the Populists, especially the middle-of-the-road faction, in whose platforms it tended to overshadow nearly every other issue; and it is perhaps significant that the initiative and referendum were first adopted by South Dakota, a state in which the Populist party had shown great strength, as close on the heels of the Populist movement as 1898. Other states soon followed the South Dakota lead, and particularly in Oregon the experiment of popular legislation was given a thorough trial.⁷ New constitutions and numerous amendments to old constitutions tended also to introduce much popularly made law, the idea that legislation in a constitution is improper and unwise receiving perhaps its most shattering blow when an Oklahoma convention wrote for that state a constitution of fifty thousand words. The recall of elected officials has been applied chiefly in municipal affairs, but some states also permit its use for state officers and a few allow even judges, traditionally held to be immune from popular reactions, to be subjected to recall. Thus many of the favorite ideas of the Populists, ideas that had once been "abused and ridiculed," were presently "respectfully given a hearing, then supported."⁸

Quite apart from these changes in the American form of government, the Populist propaganda in favor of independent voting did much to undermine the intense party loyalties that had followed in the wake of the Civil War. The time had been when for the Republican voter "to doubt Grant was as bad as to doubt Christ,"⁹

⁷ Ellis P. Oberholtzer, *The Referendum in America together with Some Chapters on the Initiative and the Recall*.

⁸ For satisfactory general discussions of these reforms see Charles A. Beard, *American Government and Politics*, 4th ed., ch. 24; Charles A. and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization*, Vol. 2, ch. 27; and David S. Muzzey, *The United States of America*, Vol. 2, ch. 7.

⁹ Barr, in *Kansas and Kansans*, 2:1194.

when the man who scratched his party ticket was regarded as little, if any, better than the traitor to his country. The Alliance in its day had sought earnestly to wean the partisan voter over to independence. It had urged its members to "favor and assist to office such candidates only as are thoroughly identified with our principles and who will insist on such legislation as shall make them effective." And in this regard the Alliance, as some of its leaders boasted, had been a "great educator of the people." The Populist party had to go even further, for its growth depended almost wholly upon its ability to bring voters to a complete renunciation of old party loyalties. Since at one time or another well over a million men cast their ballots for Populist tickets, the loosening of party ties that thus set in was of formidable proportions.

Indeed, the man who became a Populist learned his lesson almost too well. When confronted, as many Populist voters thought themselves to be in 1896, with a choice between loyalty to party and loyalty to principle, the third-party adherents generally tended to stand on principle. Thereafter, as Populism faded out, the men who once had sworn undying devotion to the Omaha platform, were compelled again to transfer their allegiance. Many Republicans became Democrats via the Populist route; many Democrats became Republicans. Most of the Populists probably returned to the parties from which they had withdrawn, but party ties, once broken, were not so strong as they had been before. The rapid passing of voters from one party to another and the wholesale scratching of ballots, so characteristic of voting today, are distinctly reminiscent of Populism; as are also the nonpartisan ballots by which judges, city commissioners, and other officers are now frequently chosen, wholly without regard to their party affiliations.

In the South the Populist demands for popular government produced a peculiar situation. To a very great extent the southern Populists were recruited from the rural classes that had hitherto been politically inarticulate. Through the Populist party the "wool hat boys" from the country sought to obtain the weight in southern politics that their numbers warranted but that the Bourbon dynasties had ever denied them. In the struggle that ensued, both sides made every possible use of the negro vote, and the bugaboo of negro domination was once again raised. Indeed, the experience of North

Carolina under a combination government of Populists and Republicans furnished concrete evidence of what might happen should the political power of the negro be restored. Under the circumstances, therefore, there seemed to be nothing else for the white Populists to do but return to their former allegiance until the menace of the negro voter could be removed.

With the Democratic party again supreme, the problem of negro voting was attacked with right good will. Indeed, as early as 1890 the state of Mississippi, stimulated no doubt the agitation over the Force Bill, adopted a constitution that fixed as a prerequisite for voting a two years' residence in the state and a one year's residence in the district or town. This provision, together with a poll tax that had to be paid far in advance of the dates set for elections, diminished appreciably the number of negro voters, among whom indigence was common and the migratory propensity well developed. To complete the work of disfranchisement an amendment was added to the Mississippi constitution in 1892 that called for a modified literary test that could be administered in such a way as to permit illiterate whites to vote, while discriminating against illiterate, or even literate, blacks. The Tillmanites in South Carolina found legal means to exclude the negro voter in 1895; Louisiana introduced her famous "grandfather clause" in 1898; North Carolina adopted residence, poll-tax, and educational qualifications in 1900; Alabama followed in 1901; and in their own good time the other southern states in which negro voters had constituted a serious problem did the same thing. Some reverses were experienced in the courts, but the net result of this epidemic of anti-negro suffrage legislation was to eliminate for the time being all danger that negro voters might play an important part in southern politics.¹⁰

With this problem out of the way, or at least in the process of solution, it became possible for the rural whites of the South to resume the struggle for a voice in public affairs that they had begun in the days of the Alliance and had continued under the banner of Populism. They did not again form a third party, but they did contend freely in the Democratic primaries against the respectable

¹⁰ Paul Lewison, "The Negro in the White Class and Party Struggle," *Southwestern Political and Social Science Quarterly*, 8:358-382. For an excellent brief statement see Holland Thompson, *The New South*, ch. 3.

and conservative descendants of the Bourbons. The Tillman machine in South Carolina continued for years to function smoothly as the agency through which the poorer classes sought to dominate the government of that state. It regularly sent Tillman to the United States Senate, where after his death his spirit lived on in the person of Cole Blease.¹¹ In Georgia the struggle for supremacy between the two factions of the Democratic party was a chronic condition, with now one side and now the other in control. Former Populists, converted by the lapse of time into regular organization Democrats, won high offices and instituted many of the reforms for which they had formerly been derided. Even Tom Watson rose from his political deathbed to show amazing strength in a race for Congress in 1918 and to win an astounding victory two years later when he sought a seat in the United States Senate.¹²

For better or for worse, the political careers of such southern politicians as James K. Vardaman and Theodore G. Bilbo of Mississippi, the Honorable "Jeff." Davis of Arkansas, and Huey P. Long of Louisiana demonstrate conclusively the fact that the lower classes in the South can, and sometimes do, place men of their own kind and choosing in high office. In these later days rural whites, who fought during Populist times with only such support as they could obtain from Republican sources, have sometimes been able to count as allies the mill operatives and their sympathizers in the factory districts; and southern primary elections are now apt to be as exciting as the regular elections are tame. Populism may have had something to do with the withdrawal of political power from the southern negro, but it also paved the way for the political emancipation of the lower class of southern whites.

The control of the government by the people was to the thoughtful Populist merely a means to an end. The next step was to use the power of the government to check the iniquities of the plutocrats. When the Populists at Omaha were baffled by the insistence of the temperance forces, they pointed out that before this or any other such reform could be accomplished they must "ask all men to first help us to determine whether we are to have a republic to adminis-

¹¹ Simkins, *Tillman Movement*, ch. 10.

¹² Arnett, *Populist Movement in Georgia*, 220-226; Brewton, *Thomas E. Watson*, chs. 44, 45.

ter." The inference is clear. Once permit the people really to rule, once insure that the men in office would not or could not betray the popular will, and such regulative measures as would right the wrongs from which the people suffered would quickly follow. The Populist believed implicitly in the ability of the people to frame and enforce the measures necessary to redeem themselves from the various sorts of oppression that were being visited upon them. They catalogued in their platform the evils from which society suffered and suggested the specific remedies by which these evils were to be overcome.

Much unfair criticism has been leveled at the Populists because of the attitude they took towards the allied subjects of banking and currency. To judge from the contemporary anti-Populist diatribes and from many subsequent criticisms of the Populist financial program, one would think that in such matters the third-party economists were little better than raving maniacs. As a matter of fact, the old-school Populists could think about as straight as their opponents. Their newspapers were well edited, and the arguments therein presented usually held together. Populist literature, moreover, was widely and carefully read by the ordinary third-party voters, particularly by the western farmers, whose periods of enforced leisure gave them ample opportunity for reading and reflection. Old-party debaters did not tackle their Populist antagonists lightly, for as frequently as not the bewhiskered rustic, turned orator, could present in support of his arguments an array of carefully sorted information that left his better-groomed opponent in a daze. The appearance of the somewhat irrelevant silver issue considerably confused Populist thinking, but even so many of the old-timers kept their heads and put silver in its proper place.

The Populists observed with entire accuracy that the currency of the United States was both inadequate and inelastic. They criticized correctly the part played by the national banking system in currency matters as irresponsible and susceptible of manipulation in the interest of the creditor class. They demanded a stabilized dollar, and they believed that it could be obtained if a national currency "safe, sound, and flexible" should be issued direct to the people by the government itself in such quantities as the reasonable demands of business should dictate. Silver and gold might be issued as well as

paper, but the value of the dollar should come from the fiat of government and not from the "intrinsic worth" of the metal.

It is interesting to note that since the time when Populists were condemned as lunatics for holding such views legislation has been adopted that, while by no means going the full length of an irredeemable paper currency, does seek to accomplish precisely the ends that the Populists had in mind. Populist and free-silver agitation forced economists to study the money question as they had never studied it before and ultimately led them to propose remedies that could run the gauntlet of public opinion and of Congress. The Aldrich-Vreeland Act of 1908 authorized an emergency currency of several hundred million dollars, to be lent to banks on approved securities in times of financial disturbance. A National Monetary Commission, created at the same time, reported after four years' intensive study in favor of a return to the Hamiltonian system of a central Bank of the United States. Instead Congress in 1914, under Wilson's leadership, adopted the federal reserve system. The Federal Reserve Act did not, indeed, destroy the national banks and avoid the intervention of bankers in all monetary matters, but it did make possible an adequate and elastic national currency, varying in accordance with the needs of the country, and it placed supreme control of the nation's banking and credit resources in the hands of a federal reserve board, appointed not by the bankers but by the president of the United States with the consent of the Senate. The Populist diagnosis was accepted, and the Populist prescription was not wholly ignored.¹³

Probably no item in the Populist creed received more thorough castigation at the hands of contemporaries than the demand for subtreasuries, or government warehouses for the private storage of grain; but the subtreasury idea was not all bad, and perhaps the Populists would have done well had they pursued it further than they did. The need that the subtreasury was designed to meet was very real. Lack of credit forced the farmer to sell his produce at the time of harvest, when the price was lowest. A cash loan on his crop that would enable him to hold it until prices should rise was all

¹³ E. W. Kemmerer, *The A B C of the Federal Reserve System*, 5th ed.; H. Parker Willis, *The Federal Reserve System, Legislation, Organization, and Operation*.

that he asked. Prices might thus be stabilized; profits honestly earned by the farmers would no longer fall to the speculators. That the men who brought forward the subtreasury as a plan for obtaining short-term rural credits also loaded it with an unworkable plan for obtaining a flexible currency was unfortunate; but the fundamental principle of the bill has by no means been discredited. Indeed, the Warehouse Act of 1916 went far towards accomplishing the very thing the Populists demanded. Under it the United States Department of Agriculture was permitted to license warehousemen and authorize them to receive, weigh, and grade farm products, for which they might issue warehouse receipts as collateral. Thus the owner might borrow the money he needed—not, however, from the government of the United States.¹⁴

In addition to the credits that the subtreasury would provide, Populist platforms usually urged also that the national government lend money on farm lands directly at a low rate of interest. This demand, which received an infinite amount of condemnation and derision at the time, has since been treated with much deference. If the government does not now print paper money to lend the farmer, with his land as security, it nevertheless does stand back of an elaborate system of banks through which he may obtain the credit he needs. Under the terms of the Federal Reserve Act national banks may lend money on farm mortgages—a privilege they did not enjoy in Populist times—and agricultural paper running as long as six months may be rediscounted by the federal reserve banks. From the farm loan banks, created by an act of 1916, the farmers may borrow for long periods sums not exceeding fifty per cent of the value of their land and twenty per cent of the value of their permanent improvements. Finally, through still another series of banks, the federal intermediate credit banks, established by an act of 1923, loans are made available to carry the farmer from one season to the next or a little longer, should occasion demand; the intermediate banks were authorized to rediscount agricultural and live-stock paper for periods of from six months to three years. Thus the government has created a comprehensive system of rural credits through which the farmer may obtain either short-term loans, loans of inter-

¹⁴ *Federal Statutes Annotated, Supplement*, 1918, pp. 1057-1065. See also Wiest, *Agricultural Organization in the United States*, 467-469.

mediate duration, or long-term loans, as his needs require, with a minimum of difficulty and at minimum interest rates.¹⁵

It would be idle to indulge in a *post hoc* argument in an attempt to prove that all these developments were due to Populism; but the intensive study of agricultural problems that led ultimately to these measures did begin with the efforts of sound economists to answer the arguments of the Populists. And it is evident that in the end the economists conceded nearly every point for which the Populists had contended.

More recent attempts to solve the agricultural problem, while assuming, as readily as even a Populist could have asked, the responsibility of the government in the matter, have progressed beyond the old Populist panacea of easy credit. Agricultural economists now have their attention fixed upon the surplus as the root of the difficulty. In industry, production can be curtailed to meet the demands of any given time, and a glutted market with the attendant decline in prices can be in a measure forestalled. But in agriculture, where each farmer is a law unto himself and where crop yields must inevitably vary greatly from year to year, control of production is well-nigh impossible and a surplus may easily become chronic. Suggestions for relief therefore looked increasingly towards the disposal of this surplus to the greatest advantage.¹⁶

The various McNary-Haugen bills that have come before Congress in recent years proposed to create a federal board through which the margin above domestic needs in years of plenty should be purchased and held, or disposed of abroad at whatever price it would bring. Through an "equalization fee" the losses sustained by "dumping" the surplus in this fashion were to be charged back upon the producers benefited. Although this proposition was agreeable to a majority of both houses of Congress, it met opposition from two successive presidents, Coolidge and Hoover, and was finally set aside for another scheme, less "socialistic." In 1929 Congress passed and the president signed a law for the creation of an appointive federal farm

¹⁵ H. Parker Willis and William H. Steiner, *Federal Reserve Banking Practice*, chs. 10-14; W. S. Holt, *The Federal Farm Loan Bureau, Its History, Activities, and Organization*; Herbert Myrick, *The Federal Farm Loan System*; A. C. Wiprud, *The Federal Farm Loan System in Operation*.

¹⁶ The Agricultural Crisis and Its Causes. Report of the Joint Commission of Agricultural Inquiry, 1921, *House Report No. 408*, 67 Congress, Session 1.

board, one of whose duties it is, among others, to encourage the organization of cooperative societies through which the farmers may themselves deal with the problem of the surplus. In case of necessity, however, the board may take the lead in the formation of stabilization corporations, which under its strict supervision may buy up such seasonal or temporary surpluses as threaten to break the market and hold them for higher prices. A huge revolving fund, appropriated by Congress, is made available for this purpose, loans from this fund being obtainable by the stabilization corporations at low interest rates. There is much about this thoroughly respectable and conservative law that recalls the agrarian demands of the nineties. Indeed, the measure goes further in the direction of government recognition of and aid to the principle of agricultural cooperation than even the most erratic Alliancemen could have dared to hope. Perhaps it will prove to be the "better plan" that the farmers called for in vain when the subtreasury was the best idea they could present.¹⁷

To the middle western Populist the railway problem was as important as any other—perhaps the most important of all. Early Alliance platforms favored drastic governmental control of the various means of communication as the best possible remedy for the ills from which the people suffered, and the first Populist platform to be written called for government ownership and operation only in case "the most rigid, honest, and just national control and supervision" should fail to "remove the abuses now existing." Thereafter the Populists usually demanded government ownership, although it is clear enough from their state and local platforms and from the votes and actions of Populist officeholders that, pending the day when ownership should become a fact, regulation by state and nation must be made ever more effective.

Possibly government ownership is no nearer today than in Populist times, but the first objective of the Populists, "the most rigid, honest, and just national control," is as nearly an accomplished fact as carefully drawn legislation and highly efficient administration can make it. Populist misgivings about governmental control arose from the knowledge that the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887, as well as

¹⁷ E. R. A. Seligman, *Economics of Farm Relief*; R. W. Kelsey, *Farm Relief and Its Antecedents*.

most regulatory state legislation, was wholly ineffectual during the nineties; but beginning with the Elkins Act of 1903, which struck at the practice of granting rebates, a long series of really workable laws found their way into the statute books. The Hepburn Act of 1906, the Mann-Elkins Act of 1910, and the Transportation Act of 1920, not to mention lesser laws, placed the Interstate Commerce Commission upon a high pinnacle of power. State laws, keeping abreast of the national program, supplemented national control with state control; and through one or the other agency most of the specific grievances of which the Populists had complained were removed.¹⁸ The arbitrary fixing of rates by the carriers, a commonplace in Populist times, is virtually unknown today. If discriminations still exist between persons or places, the Interstate Commerce Commission is apt to be as much to blame as the railroads. Free passes, so numerous in Populist times as to occasion the remark that the only people who did not have passes were those who could not afford to pay their own fare, have virtually ceased to be issued except to railway employes. Railway control of state governments, even in the old Granger states, where in earlier days party bosses took their orders directly from railway officials, has long since become a thing of the past. The railroads still may have an influence in politics, but the railroads do not rule. Governmental control of telephones, telegraphs, and pipe lines, together with such later developments as the radio and the transmission of electric power, is accepted today as a matter of course, the issues being merely to what extent control should go and through what agencies it should be accomplished.

For the trust problem, as distinguished from the railroad problem, the Populists had no very definite solution. They agreed, however, that the power of government, state and national, should be used in such a way as to prevent "individuals or corporations fastening themselves, like vampires, on the people and sucking their substance."¹⁹ Antitrust laws received the earnest approval of Alliancemen and Populists and were often initiated by them. The failure of such laws to secure results was laid mainly at the door of the courts, and when

¹⁸ William Z. Ripley, *Railroads; Rates and Regulation*; Homer B. Vanderblue and Kenneth F. Burgess, *Railroads. Rates—Service—Management*; David Philip Locklin, *Railroad Regulation since 1920*.

¹⁹ See the Cincinnati platform in the *American*, 27:167 (September 10, 1898).

Theodore Roosevelt in 1904 succeeded in securing an order from the United States Supreme Court dissolving the Northern Securities Company, it was hailed as a great victory for Populist principles. Many other incidental victories were won. Postal savings banks "for the safe deposit of the earnings of the people" encroached upon the special privileges of the bankers. An amendment to the national constitution in 1913, authorizing income taxes, recalled a contrary decision of the Supreme Court, which the Populists in their day had cited as the best evidence of the control of the government by the trusts; and income and inheritance taxes have ever since been levied. The reform of state and local taxation so as to exact a greater proportion of the taxes from the trusts and those who profit from them has also been freely undertaken. Labor demands, such as the right of labor to organize, the eight-hour day, limitation of injunctions in labor disputes, and restrictions on immigration were strongly championed by the Populists as fit measures for curbing the power of the trusts and were presently treated with great consideration. The Clayton Antitrust Act and the Federal Trade Commission Act, passed during the Wilson régime, were the products of long experience with the trust problem. The manner in which these laws have been enforced, however, would seem to indicate that the destruction of the trusts, a common demand in Populist times, is no longer regarded as feasible and that by government control the interests of the people can best be conserved.²⁰

On the land question the Populist demands distinctly foreshadowed conservation. "The land," according to the Omaha declaration, "including all the natural resources of wealth, is the heritage of all the people and should not be monopolized for speculative purposes." Land and resources already given away were of course difficult to get back, and the passing of the era of free lands could not be repealed by law, but President Roosevelt soon began to secure results in the way of the reclamation and irrigation of arid western lands, the enlargement and protection of the national forests, the improvement of internal waterways, and the withdrawal from entry of lands bearing mineral wealth such as coal, oil, and phosphates.

²⁰ Eliot Jones, *The Trust Problem in the United States*; Henry R. Seager and Charles A. Gulick, *Trust and Corporation Problems*; Myron W. Watkins, *Industrial Combinations and Public Policy*.

At regular intervals, since 1908, the governors of the states have met together in conference to discuss the conservation problem, and this once dangerous Populist doctrine has now won all but universal acceptance.²¹

It would thus appear that much of the Populist program has found favor in the eyes of later generations. Populist plans for altering the machinery of government have, with but few exceptions, been carried into effect. Referring to these belated victories of the Populists, William Allen White, the man who had once asked, "What's the matter with Kansas?" wrote recently, "They abolished the established order completely and ushered in a new order."²² Mrs. Mary E. Lease looked back proudly in 1914 on her political career:

In these later years I have seen, with gratification, that my work in the good old Populist days was not in vain. The Progressive party has adopted our platform, clause by clause, plank by plank. Note the list of reforms which we advocated which are coming into reality. Direct election of senators is assured. Public utilities are gradually being removed from the hands of the few and placed under the control of the people who use them. Woman suffrage is now almost a national issue. . . . The seed we sowed out in Kansas did not fall on barren ground.²³

Thanks to this triumph of Populist principles, one may almost say that, in so far as political devices can insure it, the people now rule. Political dishonesty has not altogether disappeared and the people may yet be betrayed by the men they elect to office, but on the whole the acts of government have come to reflect fairly clearly the will of the people. Efforts to assert this newly won power in such a way as to crush the economic supremacy of the predatory few have also been numerous and not wholly unsuccessful. The gigantic corporations of today, dwarfing into insignificance the trusts of yesterday, are, in spite of their size, far more circumspect in their conduct than their predecessors. If in the last analysis "big business" controls, it is because it has public opinion on its side and not merely the party bosses.

To radicals of today, however, the Populist panaceas, based as

²¹ Theodore Roosevelt, *Autobiography*, ch. 11; Charles R. Van Hise, *The Conservation of Natural Resources in the United States*.

²² White, in *Scribners' Magazine*, 79:564.

²³ *Kansas City Star*, March 29, 1931.

they were upon an essentially individualistic philosophy and designed merely to insure for every man his right to "get ahead" in the world, seem totally inadequate. These latter-day extremists point to the perennial reappearance of such problems as farm relief, unemployment, unfair taxation, and law evasion as evidence that the Populist type of reform is futile, that something more drastic is required. Nor is their contention without point. It is reasonable to suppose that progressivism itself must progress; that the programs that would provide solutions for the problems of one generation might fall far short of meeting the needs of a succeeding generation. Perhaps one may not agree with the view of some present-day radicals that only a revolution will suffice and that the very attempt to make existing institutions more tolerable is treason to any real progress, since by so doing the day of revolution is postponed; but one must recognize that when the old Populist panaceas can receive the enthusiastic support of Hooverian Republicans and Alsmithian Democrats these once startling demands are no longer radical at all. One is reminded of the dilemma that Alice of Wonderland encountered when she went through the looking-glass into the garden of live flowers. On and on she ran with the Red Queen, but however fast they went they never seemed to pass anything.

"Well, in our country," said Alice, still panting a little, "you'd generally get to somewhere else—if you ran very fast for a long time as we've been doing."

"A slow sort of country!" said the Queen, "Now here, you see, it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run twice as fast as that!"

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HENRY PRINGLE

GREAT BIOGRAPHIES can be written only by men who are fundamentally in sympathy with the people they describe. Antagonism is apt to produce misunderstanding rather than insight and caricature rather than characterization. But respect for one's subject is hardly a guarantee of a true portrait. Indeed, more biographies have been distorted by unrestrained praise than by excessive criticism. Except for the professional "debunkers," authors are commonly led to a biographical subject by a feeling of sympathy. At the end of a period of difficult research, it is more natural to emphasize a man's constructive contribution than his limitations. Discovering a man's essential insignificance has never had the same appeal that comes from revealing his previously undetected importance.

The temptation toward favorable exaggeration is especially strong when the subject is a national hero whose patriotic achievements are a matter of historical record. The weight of the figure's generally accepted reputation lies heavily upon the biographer's mind. He may be intimidated into merely documenting his subject's virtues—or, on the other hand, he may be provoked into a search for faults which do not necessarily exist. Between these extremes is the independent judgment upon which all successful scholarship is based. When a natural rapport between author and subject takes the place of forced enthusiasm, insight is not limited to the description of praiseworthy episodes and approval is not made the equivalent of eulogy.

So conspicuous a figure as Theodore Roosevelt offers a dif-

ficult challenge to a biographer. Any new biography invites comparison with the many studies already produced, and even refreshes the memories of those of Roosevelt's contemporaries who are still alive. In attempting a fresh interpretation of Roosevelt's personality and an independent appraisal of his achievements, Henry Pringle had to compete in a crowded field.

The result of Pringle's labor is one of the best and most readable political biographies in American literature. Pringle's journalistic experience endowed him with a sense of the dramatic and the absurd which enabled him to make the Rooseveltian enthusiasms leap from the pages. The course of the President's political career was set down with incisive clarity. The Roosevelt who emerged in 1931 from Pringle's pen was essentially a conservative, whose genius it was to recognize that the most effective way to preserve the American system was to purge its abuses. Although he himself did not conceive the innovations with which his administration is credited, he not only publicized reform in an effective manner but also provided the political acumen necessary for the passage of legislation which the leaders of the Republican party generally opposed.

Although he recognizes Roosevelt's abilities and sympathizes with the measures which gave distinction to his presidency, Pringle's portrait is essentially less flattering than the traditional one. Others have emphasized the forceful man of action, but Pringle stresses the devious political maneuvers which Roosevelt was willing to engage in to gain a limited success. The line at which expediency turns to timidity and compromise to betrayal is difficult to draw, but Pringle locates it in such a way as to suggest Roosevelt's weakness rather than his strength. The exaggerated personal behavior which delighted a generation of Americans often becomes in Pringle's picture merely ridiculous.

Pringle is saved from caricature by a solid respect for facts and by his historical perspective. But if a complaint can be made about his work it would derive from the harshness of his criticism. Although Roosevelt may have been as absurd as the author

occasionally makes him, the historical significance lies not in what his personality was intrinsically but in what his contemporaries thought of it. His immense popularity does not suggest that they thought him an object of ridicule. On a more serious level, it seems proper to suggest that the indirection and compromise which Roosevelt employed to achieve his purposes might as well be a subject of praise as of the condescension with which Pringle treats them. All successful Presidents have been guided as much by the thought of what was possible as by the principles of what was right.

But these are minor flaws in an outstanding work in American biography. Pringle has reproduced the excitement of the Roosevelt years and defined the essential significance of the period with a clarity which time cannot obscure. Few works are more successful in re-creating the past and making it meaningful to the present.

Malefactors of Great Wealth

I DO NOT like the social conditions at present," Roosevelt complained to Taft in March, 1906. "The dull, purblind folly of the very rich men; their greed and arrogance . . . and the corruption in business and politics, have tended to produce a very unhealthy condition of excitement and irritation in the popular mind, which shows itself in the great increase in the socialistic propaganda."¹

The domestic policies of the President in his second term were argely a result of this apprehension. "... The growth of the socialistic

From *Theodore Roosevelt*, copyright, 1931, by Henry F. Pringle. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

¹ Roosevelt to Taft, Mar. 15, 1906.

party," he said, ". . . [is] far more ominous than any populist or similar movement in times past."² He was nervously anxious to cure the evils that existed; perhaps Roosevelt's genius lay in the fact that he realized their existence. The assets that gave him power were his gifts as a politician and his flair for arousing public interest. The liabilities that held him back were his sparsity of knowledge on economics, which approached ignorance, and his alliance with the Republican party. He had to work through such leaders as Speaker Cannon and Senators Aldrich, Allison, Foraker and Spooner. They were all of them conservatives, complacent and unafraid. They had no forebodings of the class war which, to Roosevelt, was an immediate possibility.

Always in the back of his mind, also, was the fear that if he went too far or too fast he faced the peril of business unrest. A panic might mean the defeat of his party. This was the worst of all possible dangers, for Roosevelt sincerely believed the Democratic party to be far less talented than his own in the science of government. It was permissible to appropriate theories and principles first conceived by Democracy, although wise to forget that this had been done. To subject the United States to the risk of Democratic rule was close to treason.

Roosevelt had often compromised, but hitherto his own political fortunes had been responsible. A higher expediency moved him in 1905 and 1906, and the first issue on which he surrendered was tariff revision. After the death of McKinley, Speaker Cannon wrote, the new President had been "full of revision," but had been handicapped by the fact that "economics was a subject of which he knew nothing."³ On April 4, 1903, Roosevelt spoke on this troublesome issue at Minneapolis and his address, which avoided any positive recommendations, contained a phrase or two that had a familiar sound.⁴ When David B. Hill, the New York State Democratic leader, pointed to a deadly parallel in sections of Roosevelt's speech and an address by Elihu Root in October of the previous year, the President confessed:

² Roosevelt to Charles F. Gettemy, Feb. 1, 1905.

³ Busbey, L. W., *Op. cit.*, pp. 209-10.

⁴ *Presidential Addresses*, Vol. I, pp. 294-302.

Alas! Hill has proved that I plagiarized from you. The worst of it is that I did, you know! I am now busy looking through your last tariff speech with the firm intention of plagiarizing from it, too.⁵

If he did, he took the precaution of changing the phraseology instead of again repeating Root word for word. But no suggestion for downward revision came from the White House. The tariff had become, as we have seen, a question "of expediency and not of morality." The 1904 campaign was approaching and, as Uncle Joe remarked, "no matter how much an improvement the new tariff may be, it almost always results in the party in power losing the following election."⁶ Every one agreed that nothing should be done before or during the campaign, but after Roosevelt's victory even Root, who was hardly a radical on such matters, thought that the party could not successfully go before the voters in 1908 unless some action toward revision had been taken.⁷

Roosevelt, however, remained dubious. ". . . It is not an issue," he told James Ford Rhodes, "upon which I should have any business to break with my party."⁸ His message to Congress on December 6, 1904, did not mention the tariff,⁹ and all the rumors about changes to be made by the "friends of protection" came to nothing. It was Speaker Cannon whose influence predominated.

"Whence comes this so-called demand for tariff tinkering?" Uncle Joe demanded in November, 1905. "Aren't all our fellows happy?"¹⁰

In his annual message that year, Roosevelt said that there was "more need of stability than of the attempt to attain an ideal perfection in the methods of raising revenue"; his only reference was that Congress might well consider reciprocity agreements with other nations.¹¹ By 1906, Roosevelt had concentrated on other matters.

"I . . . believe that the tariff must be revised," he told Jacob Riis in April, ". . . but of course I am up to my ears in all the fighting that I can well undertake at the moment."¹²

⁵ Roosevelt to Root, Apr. 23, 1903.

⁶ Busbey, L. W., *Op. cit.*, p. 211.

⁷ Root to Roosevelt, Nov. 16, 1904.

⁸ Roosevelt to James Ford Rhodes, Nov. 29, 1904.

⁹ *Works*, Vol. XV, pp. 215-66.

¹⁰ *Washington Post*, Nov. 17, 1905.

¹¹ *Works*, Vol. XV, pp. 291-92.

¹² Roosevelt to Riis, Apr. 18, 1906.

Before long, however, he was wavering again; "If I were the legislative as well as the executive branch I would revise the tariff right away," he said in August. He doubted that anything could be done prior to the 1908 campaign. Then, he hoped, the Republican platform would "promise immediate action in the direction of a revision."¹³

Again, Uncle Joe forced his views upon the White House. From his home in Danville, Illinois, he wrote that a "promise now to revise would bring us defeat" in the approaching congressional election.¹⁴ Roosevelt's apprehensions that, on the other hand, failure to make this pledge would result in a Democratic victory were not realized.¹⁵ On February 28, 1907, the President admitted that the Speaker of the House had been right:

For the last two years I have accepted your view as to just what we should say on the tariff—or rather as to what we should not say—and I am satisfied that it was wiser than the course I had intended to follow.¹⁶

By his agility, Roosevelt escaped the consequences of this vexatious issue. It had bothered him ever since, as a youth, he had abandoned his advocacy of free trade. He bequeathed it to Taft, who also learned, in 1910, that Uncle Joe had sound views, politically speaking, on tariff reform.

2

In selecting regulation of the railroads as an issue on which he was willing to fight, Roosevelt demonstrated his grasp of popular prejudices and popular limitations. "We *must* have legislation," he wrote in January, 1905.¹⁷ "On the interstate commerce business, which I regard as a matter of principle," he told the editor of the Outlook "I shall fight."¹⁸

Hostility toward the railroads had been increasing since 1900. At first, probably until well past the middle of the century, the railroads basked in the sunlight of public approval. The new civilization they

¹³ Roosevelt to John A. Sleicher, Aug. 11, 1906.

¹⁴ Cannon to Roosevelt, Aug. 17, 1906.

¹⁵ Roosevelt to Root, Aug. 18, 1906.

¹⁶ Roosevelt to Cannon, Feb. 28, 1907.

¹⁷ Roosevelt to John J. McCook, Jan. 10, 1905.

¹⁸ Roosevelt to Lyman Abbott, Jan. 11, 1905.

were to bring had seemed very fair indeed and legislatures and municipal governments bid against each other in offering inducements to the promoters building the new lines. Heartache and bitter disappointment accompanied the expansion, of course, but they were limited to the villages and towns which had failed to make their offers attractive enough, which were left "off the railroad," and abandoned to the processes of industrial decay.¹⁹ Even during the era of expansion in 1880 to 1890, however, it appeared that evils had arisen. The word "rebates" came to have a sinister meaning to the farmer and the workingman. It appeared that the railroads had been cutting their rates in order to strengthen powerful shippers at the expense of weaker competitors. A witness before the Cullom Committee, in 1886, explained:

You can take hold of one man and build him up at the expense of the others, and the railroad will get the tonnage.

Q. The effect is to build that one man up and destroy the others?

A. Yes, sir; but it accomplished the purpose of the railroad better.²⁰

Since there were certain to be numerous weak men who suffered at the expense of each beneficiary, this practice became a cause of denunciation. The abuse had an infinite variety of forms: allowances by the railroads for private freight cars owned by the shipper, free storage, free cartage, special carload rates. The railroads were soon as weary of rebating as the shipper who had been discriminated against. They learned, unfortunately too late, that an industry to which they had given rate concessions, and which had flourished, soon demanded further reductions. The Standard Oil Company, the worst of all the offenders, went so far as to insist that a surtax be added to the tariffs imposed on its competitors.²¹ Out of these evils grew the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887, an ineffective measure. Insufferable delays followed the promulgation of its orders against secret rebates. By 1899, most of the old discriminations were being practiced again.²² Moreover, the blessings that were to have followed the growth of the railroads had failed, in part, to materialize. For every farmer who "sold his pasture land" and took down, as innumerable rural ballads

¹⁹ Sullivan, Mark, *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 260-61.

²⁰ Ripley, William Z., *Railroads; Rates and Regulation*, pp. 185-86.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 190-92.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 456-87.

told, his "gold-top walking cane," a dozen suffered from excessive freight rates.

In his first message to Congress, President Roosevelt pointed to defects in the act of 1887 and recommended changes that would bring fair rates to all shippers. But this was when Roosevelt was exceedingly cautious; he hurriedly added that the railroads were "the arteries through which the commercial life blood of this nation flows."²³ He left the details to Congress, and nothing was done. His action in bringing the Northern Securities suit in 1902, greatly as it distressed J. P. Morgan and the other railroad financiers, had nothing to do with the specific problem of rate regulation. By 1903, the railroads were again suffering from the demands made by large shippers, and they cordially endorsed amendments to the 1887 law sponsored by Senator Elkins of West Virginia. The important point to be remembered in judging Roosevelt's railroad regulation fight was that this bill did not relate to the main problem. It provided teeth for the original act against rebating, but it was not "even a preliminary skirmish" in the main struggle, for railroad rates that would be fair and reasonable.²⁴

James J. Hill of the Great Northern made this clear in January, 1905. "Every railroad would be happy to have rebates abolished and the law against them enforced," he said. "Why does not the Interstate Commerce Commission prosecute . . . ? The law never has been enforced or anyone prosecuted." But government regulation of the tariffs was far different. "Competition," he insisted, forgetting that the Northern Securities Company would effectively have abolished this in the Northwest, "is the test which proves the survival of the fittest. . . . The laws of trade are as certain . . . as the laws of gravity."²⁵

The impression has been given that President Roosevelt's message to Congress in December, 1904, recommended a law giving power to fix rates to the Interstate Commerce Commission.²⁶ This was not the case. His proposal was formulated in subsequent speeches or letters.

²³ *Works*, Vol. XV, pp. 101-02.

²⁴ Ripley, W. Z., *Op. cit.*, pp. 492-94.

²⁵ *New York World*, Jan. 3, 1905.

²⁶ Bishop, J. B., *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 426; Ripley, W. Z., *Op. cit.*, p. 496.

In this case, he told Congress that "I am of the opinion that at present it would be undesirable, if it were not impracticable, finally to clothe the commission with general authority to fix rates." The commission should, however, have power, "where a given rate has been challenged and after full hearing found to be unreasonable . . . to decide what shall be a reasonable rate to take its place." This was to go into effect at once, subject to "judicial review."²⁷ The distinction is important because Roosevelt, after venturing somewhat further during one of the most bitter debates in congressional history, ultimately accepted as a compromise the Hepburn Bill providing virtually his first specifications. It was in the Union League Club address at Philadelphia on January 30, 1905, that the President called for control over rates by "some tribunal."²⁸ It was this speech, not the message to Congress, which aroused the respectables to apprehension concerning the President whom they had placed in the White House.

In May, 1904, President Butler of Columbia University warned Roosevelt that Governor Robert M. LaFollette of Wisconsin, whose reverberations against the corrupt alliance of business and politics had been echoing through the country, was a fanatic, and dangerous to Republican success in 1904.²⁹ "I agree with you . . . you read LaFollette exactly right," answered Roosevelt.³⁰ On June 5, 1908, he wrote to Lincoln Steffens:

. . . you contend that Taft and I are good people of limited vision who fight against specific evils with no idea of fighting against a fundamental evil; whereas LaFollette is engaged in a fight against *the* "fundamental" evil. . . . LaFollette has been three years in the Senate. His "plan" . . . consists . . . of a string of platitudes and to adopt it wouldn't mean anything. . . . Like Tillman he has made great personal gains by what he has done as Senator, because he has advertised himself so that both he and Tillman are very popular in the Chautauquas where the people listen to them both, sometimes getting ideas that are right, more often getting ideas that are wrong, and on the whole not getting any ideas at all . . . and simply feeling the kind of

²⁷ *Works*, Vol. XV, pp. 215-66.

²⁸ *Presidential Addresses*, Vol. III, p. 222.

²⁹ Butler to Roosevelt, May 19, 1904.

³⁰ Roosevelt to Butler, May 21, 1904.

pleasurable excitement that they would at the sight of a two-headed calf, or of a trick performed on a spotted circus horse.

LaFollette, however, was not in the Senate when the rate fight started in 1905. His revelations in Wisconsin, combined with rising freight rates since 1900, caused the more liberal House of Representatives to pass a bill, the Townsend-Esch measure, by which the Interstate Commerce Commission could declare a freight or passenger rate unjust and could fix a substitute, which would go into effect in thirty days. Appeal could be taken to the courts.⁸¹ This was Roosevelt's own bill, and its provisions were those of his message to Congress in 1904. No action was taken by the Senate, however, and as he drafted his message for 1905, the President approached, although he did not fully accept it, the principle of blanket rate-fixing. By November, he was sponsoring a bill that would grant authority to the Interstate Commerce Commission to specify maximum rates.

"The railroads have been crazy in their hostility," he wrote.⁸²

"... The most pressing need," the President said in his message on December 5, 1905, "... is the enactment into law of some scheme to secure to ... the Government such supervision and regulation of ... rates ... as shall *summarily and effectively prevent the imposition of unjust or unreasonable rates.*" This was definitely more affirmative language than had appeared in his earlier messages. Although he again disavowed proposals to "initiate or originate rates generally," and said the control was to be limited to complaints brought on existing tariff schedules, the advance in Roosevelt's position was clear. "... The most important of all the powers I recommend," he said, was the right of the Interstate Commerce Commission or some similar body "to fix a maximum rate, which rate, after the lapse of a reasonable time, goes into full effect, subject to review by the courts." Even more indicative of the President's growing radicalism, perhaps, was his specification that there should be full publicity of all accounts of the common carriers. This caused additional apprehension in the breasts of the railroad men and their bankers, for they saw in it a threat of future action that could be defined only as sheer socialism. This was an impartial valuation of the railroad properties and the fixing of rates on the basis of a fair

⁸¹ New York *World*, Feb. 10, 1905.

⁸² Roosevelt to Ray Stannard Baker, Nov. 20, 1905.

return on capital invested. Roosevelt did not touch on this in his message but he added, characteristically:

"We desire to set up a moral standard."³³

3

Both sides prepared for the battle during 1905. The railroads did so by flooding the newspapers of the country with propaganda. Their agents toured the country interviewing editors, and submitted reports as to the best method whereby these molders of public opinion could be influenced. One of them, who had confessed to anticorporation prejudices and who had revealed enthusiasm for Roosevelt, was a "weak and bibulous man. Tractable to R.R. suggestions." Such mythical organizations as the "Alabama Commercial and Industrial Association" held conventions for the adoption of resolutions denouncing rate regulation.³⁴

Nor was Roosevelt idle. He made several addresses in the summer and fall of 1905 in which he emphasized the views he was to advance in his message to Congress. Incidents quite out of the President's hands brought public opinion to his side. Among them were the insurance scandals in New York during 1905, a general disruption of railway service due to bad management, and the revelation of rebating on the Santa Fe system. Then Roosevelt took action of his own to portray the corporations, in general, and the railroads, in particular, in dark tones before the country. The Elkins amendments, besides stiffening the penalties for rebating, provided that the shippers who received the concessions were culpable along with the railroads. On December 11, 1905, Attorney-General William H. Moody gave instructions that prosecutions were to be started by the Federal authorities of all jurisdictions.³⁵ Two days later, the Chicago grand jury returned an indictment which charged that the Chicago & Alton, and various of its officers, had given rebates to certain packing concerns.³⁶ Eight additional indictments were returned in Chicago on December 14, the Great Northern being among the latest defendants.³⁷ On December 15, a Federal grand jury in Kansas City

³³ *Works*, Vol. XV, pp. 274-80 (*italics mine*).

³⁴ Ripley, W. Z., *Op. cit.*, pp. 496-97.

³⁵ New York Times, Dec. 12, 1905.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Dec. 14, 1905.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Dec. 15, 1905.

accused such eminent Republican campaign contributors as the Armour Packing Company, Swift & Company, the Cudahy Packing Company, and Nelson Morris & Company, as well as the Burlington, the St. Paul, and the Chicago & Alton railroads, of having received or granted freight rebates.³⁸

Further prejudice against the corporate interests had been aroused during the past three or four years by the muckrackers, those industrious and honest writers whose exposures sometimes disturbed Roosevelt as much as they disturbed the respectables. Miss Tarbell's history of the Standard Oil Company had started in 1902 in *McClure's Magazine*. Then had come the revelations by Lincoln Steffens and Ray Stannard Baker. Then, in February, 1906, Upton Sinclair published *The Jungle*, with its nauseating description of conditions under which meat was prepared.³⁹ On March 4, 1906, while the debate on railroad regulation was in progress in the Senate, the President made public the report of his Bureau of Corporations on the Standard Oil.

"The report shows," said Roosevelt, transmitting it to Congress, "that the Standard Oil Company has benefited enormously up almost to the present moment by secret rates. . . . This benefit amounts to at least three-quarters of a million a year." Roosevelt added that the Standard Oil was not the only corporation thus profiting. An investigation under way "as to shipments by the sugar trust over the trunk lines out of New York City tends to show that the sugar trust rarely, if ever, pays the lawful rate for transportation."⁴⁰

It was to be a gaudy battle, this debate in which "liar," "unqualified falsehood," "betrayal," "surrender," and "chief cuckoos of the White House" were among the words and phrases scribbled by hurrying stenographers as they recorded for history the barrage of oratory. Roosevelt's bill was introduced by Representative Peter Hepburn of Iowa on January 4, 1906, and provided substantially his plan for railroad regulation contained in his message in December.⁴¹ It was promptly passed by the House by the large majority of 346 to 7.⁴²

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Dec. 16, 1905.

³⁹ Sullivan, Mark, *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 84-86.

⁴⁰ *Presidential Addresses*, Vol. V, pp. 742-43.

⁴¹ *New York Times*, Jan. 5, 1906.

⁴² *Washington Star*, Feb. 8, 1906.

Opposition so strong that defeat of the Hepburn Bill seemed probable was at once apparent in the Senate. On February 12, 1906, Senator Lodge made a long, scholarly address in which he said that more stringent penalties against rebating were doubtless needed as well as publicity for railroad earnings. But freight rates, on the whole, were not excessive.⁴³ This defiance on the part of Roosevelt's closest friend naturally started rumors of a break in the harmony that had lasted for so many years. But the President, in a letter to Lyman Abbott, conceded Lodge's sincerity.⁴⁴ It was not the only desertion; Senator Knox of Pennsylvania opposed the measure also. On February 18, 1906, he introduced an amendment providing for liberal court review of decisions in rate cases.⁴⁵

The leaders of the opposition were Senator Aldrich, the Republican party whip, Foraker, and Elkins. The first of these, a son-in-law of John D. Rockefeller, was a dominating influence in the Senate. Elkins, the railroad Senator at whose suggestion the original Act of 1887 had been amended in 1903, was chairman of the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce. It was Aldrich and Elkins, apparently, who evolved what appeared to be an exceedingly clever scheme to embarrass Roosevelt. First, Elkins declined to sponsor the bill, although as the Republican chairman of a Senate committee this would be the usual course in relation to an administration measure. Then Aldrich, who also was a member of the Interstate Commerce Committee, secured adoption of a resolution that placed Senator Tillman of South Carolina, the famous "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman, in charge of Roosevelt's bill.⁴⁶ This was on February 23.⁴⁷

Tillman, in addition to being a Democrat, was one of the Senators most disliked by Roosevelt. On February 24, 1902, the President had publicly withdrawn an invitation to dinner at the White House, where Prince Henry of Germany was guest of honor, because the South Carolinian had engaged in a brawl on the floor of the Senate.⁴⁸ A year later, referring to the Booker T. Washington incident, Tillman said that he never expected to go to the White House "while

⁴³ *Congressional Record*, Fifty-ninth Congress, pp. 2414-23.

⁴⁴ Lodge, H. C., *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 212-13.

⁴⁵ *New York Times*, Feb. 19, 1906.

⁴⁶ Sullivan, Mark, *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 228-29.

⁴⁷ *New York Commercial*, Feb. 24, 1906.

⁴⁸ *New York Tribune*, Feb. 25, 1902.

Roosevelt occupies it. . . . I do not blame any Southern man for opposing the practice of social equality, that is, if he is a white man."⁴⁹

"I regarded the action as simply childish,"⁵⁰ Roosevelt said, on the Aldrich-Elkins maneuver, but it seriously jeopardized hope of success. Tillman was an ardent supporter of Roosevelt's rate bill, but how could he confer with the President? How could the President summon, at the peril of rebuke, the leader of the opposition? He went so far as to intimate that he believed Mr. Tillman to be a great and good man, after all. It was said that the White House latchstring had been hung out for his particular benefit.⁵¹

The final debate in the Senate was whether rates were to be regulated by an extension of the executive branch or by the judiciary. It is not difficult to understand why Roosevelt energetically supported the former theory, but it was on this point that he compromised, a compromise that brought heated charges of falsehood and bad faith. Late in March a solution was offered for the awkward situation of having a Democrat, who was also personally antagonistic to Roosevelt, in charge of the President's bill. A personal conference was not possible, but former Senator William E. Chandler of New Hampshire, holding a lame-duck appointive post at the capital, could serve as intermediary. On March 31, 1906, the President requested Chandler to call at the White House. An amusing, almost an idiotic, series of visits followed. Chandler hurried from the White House to the office of Pitchfork Ben and quoted Roosevelt as saying that Senators Knox, Spooner, and Foraker were attempting to defeat the bill. On April 1, Tillman shared this information with his colleague, Senator Joseph W. Bailey of Texas, and then Chandler brought word from the White House that there should be no difficulty about an agreement on the Hepburn amendments. The liaison activities continued until April 15, when Chandler, Bailey, and Tillman had a conference with Moody, Roosevelt's Attorney-General. The result of this was the drafting of an amendment that gave to the courts limited powers in passing on the rates fixed by the Interstate Commerce Commission.

Such, at least, was the story told by Senator Tillman when he

⁴⁹ *Memphis News*, Jan. 24, 1903.

⁵⁰ *Autobiography*, p. 435.

⁵¹ Sullivan, Mark, *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 233.

spoke in high indignation on May 12, 1906, and charged the President with breaking faith.⁵² Meanwhile, as Roosevelt's letters prove and as soon became evident, the President had been negotiating with the conservative group. On April 12, he had written to Senator Allison of Iowa that he opposed an amendment providing interference with the commission by the injunction method. On the following day, he wrote that he was not certain that the Constitution would permit such an amendment because it limited the power of the courts.⁵³ On May 5, he announced that he would accept—not the Tillman amendment drafted by his own Attorney-General—but an amendment written by Senator Allison. It permitted the rates to be set aside by injunction proceedings and it represented victory, of a sort, for the railroad Senators.⁵⁴

Thereupon Tillman exploded in the Senate that Roosevelt had made derogatory remarks regarding members of his own party. When the South Carolinian finished, Cabot Lodge presented a message from the President who, said the Massachusetts Senator, had declared the accusation "a deliberate and unqualified falsehood."⁵⁵ The quarrel, as Roosevelt's usually did, became even more violent before it ended. Articles appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* and the *New York Tribune* in which it was said that the President had been forced to desert Tillman because of the defection of his colleague, Senator Bailey. Undoubtedly these articles were inspired by the White House. They were written, said Bailey in the speech in which he, in turn, defended himself, by correspondents who were the "two chief cuckoos" of the administration. The statement that he had abandoned Tillman was "an unqualified, a deliberate and malicious lie."⁵⁶ Five years later President Taft, talking to Archie Butt, recalled that Roosevelt had occasionally "left his old friends," but soon returned to the fold:

... when he would get into hot water, he would send for the conservative members of the Cabinet and depend upon us to get him out of it. How well I remember the time he was pressing his rate bill.⁵⁷

⁵² *Congressional Record*, Fifty-ninth Congress, p. 6775.

⁵³ Roosevelt to John D. Kernan, Apr. 13, 1907.

⁵⁴ *New York Tribune*, May 6, 1906.

⁵⁵ *Washington Star*, May 13, 1906.

⁵⁶ Sullivan, Mark, *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 267-70; *Chicago Tribune*, May 15, 1906; *New York Tribune*, May 16, 1906.

⁵⁷ Butt, Archie, *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 346.

In all probability, despite his denials, Roosevelt had used derogatory terms in talking with Chandler about the opponents of his bill. It was his invariable custom to do so. "It's only a railroad law you want; not to cut the railroads out of the government," accused Lincoln Steffens, and to this Roosevelt agreed.⁵⁸ Such was his policy. Such, as he saw it, was the path of progress.

For all its defects, the Hepburn Act of 1906 was a step forward and without Roosevelt the Senate would never have passed the bill, as it did on March 18, 1906, by a vote of 71 to 3.⁵⁹ The Interstate Commerce Commission had jurisdiction over pipe lines, express and Pullman operation, valuation, storage, and all the other aspects covered by the general term, transportation. The rate-making powers of the commission had been strengthened, although the courts were given more jurisdiction than Roosevelt desired. For violation of an order by the commission a penalty of \$5,000 a day could be enforced. Prison penalties were also provided, but the clause requiring publicity of accounts was probably as important as any other. Honest accounting, now obligatory because the Government could examine the books of the railroads just as it could investigate the books of national banks, made for honesty of tariffs.⁶⁰

But the plea of LaFollette, that fair rates could not possibly be determined unless the property of the carriers had first been evaluated,⁶¹ had no effect for a good many years to come; not until Aldrich and Spooner and Allison and Lodge had seen their party wrecked by the upheaval of 1912. On May 8, 1907, Roosevelt confessed in a letter to Beveridge of Indiana that "events have moved so fast in the valuation business that I think it is impossible to avoid taking a conservative ground in its favor." On May 30, at Indianapolis, the President said that the Interstate Commerce Commission should undertake valuation of the roads, but he urged this in the name of "real . . . conservatism." He said that it would guard the carriers against "inadequate and unjust rates."⁶² In his final message to Congress of December, 1908, Roosevelt called for "complete control over the issue of securities as well as over the raising or lowering of

⁵⁸ Steffens, Lincoln, *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 514.

⁵⁹ *Washington Post*, May 18, 1906.

⁶⁰ Ripley, W. Z., *Op. cit.*, pp. 499-508; 515-19.

⁶¹ *New York Press*, Apr. 20, 1906.

⁶² *Presidential Addresses*, Vol. VI, pp. 1249-56.

rates."⁶³ But he was soon to leave the White House. His political influence was ebbing.

4

They were busy years. The Russo-Japanese War, the Algeiras Conference, the possible menace of Japan, railroad regulation, the tariff: all these problems, technical and involved as they were, did not occupy fully the energies of the extraordinary personality in the White House. He had been attempting to view his country as a whole when he told Taft that "I like the social conditions at present."⁶⁴ The very fact that Roosevelt hoped for remedies that would benefit every one made the task almost impossible. He said to Sir George Trevelyan that the corporations had to be controlled "without paralyzing the energies of the business community," while "tyranny on the part of the labor unions" had to be prevented and, at the same time, encouragement offered to "every proper effort made by the wage-workers to better themselves by combinations."⁶⁵

The victory of the Government in the Northern Securities case had made valid again the provisions, whatever they may have been worth, of the Sherman antitrust law. In Roosevelt's mind this was not adequate protection against corporate power and on this, as much as on any issue, he worried his advisers. On December 24, 1904, as Roosevelt gave consideration to his trust-control program, Elihu Root begged him not to be precipitate regarding a proposal for Federal licensing of corporations. "It was Bryan's," he wrote, "and I think involves evils far greater than its benefits."

Roosevelt's corporation policy did not differ materially from his views as governor of New York. The remedy, he felt, lay in publicity of earnings and capitalization. At Chautauqua, New York, on August 11, 1905, the President said that certain of the large industrial combinations "by secret methods and . . . protracted litigation" sought to defeat the laws supposed to control them. He opposed "drastic action," but this might come "if . . . they foster the popular feeling which calls for such drastic action":

I believe that all corporations engaged in interstate commerce should

⁶³ *Works*, Vol. XV, p. 491.

⁶⁴ Roosevelt to Taft, Mar. 15, 1906.

⁶⁵ Roosevelt to Sir George Trevelyan, Mar. 9, 1905.

be under the supervision of the national Government. . . . It may be that we shall . . . require all corporations . . . to produce proof . . . that they are not parties to . . . any violation of the anti-trust law and that . . . [they] shall agree, with a penalty of forfeiture of their right to engage in such commerce, to furnish any evidence of any kind as to their trade between the States whenever so required.⁶⁶

Again, it is necessary to point to Roosevelt's fundamental belief, that the Federal Government was sovereign. In his message to Congress in December, 1905, he said that the corporations engaged in interstate business were "subjects without a sovereign," and that it might be essential to amend the Constitution to provide adequate control.⁶⁷ A year later he mentioned a national license law as a possible solution.⁶⁸ In 1907, he definitely advocated such a statute.

"This is not advocating centralization," he said, "it is merely looking facts in the face."⁶⁹

But Roosevelt was again ahead of his time and it was impossible, even for him, to engage in battles comparable to the one on railroad rates on all these issues. Partly because the Government was handicapped by the law and thwarted by clever attorneys employed by the trusts, partly because Roosevelt was so busy on other matters, rather little was accomplished in actual prosecutions or in the dissolution of illegal combinations. Suits were instituted against the tobacco and packing trusts. The Interstate Commerce Commission put E. H. Harriman on the stand and a degree of public excitement was aroused by the unfortunately arrogant testimony of that railroad magnate. The New York Central Railroad was fined for rebates given to the American Sugar Refining Company. But it was not until the Taft Administration that the Standard Oil Company and the American Tobacco Company were ordered to dissolve. It was not until Woodrow Wilson came into power that the Clayton Act, an extension of trust control, became law.⁷⁰ Roosevelt's title as "Trust Buster" was, as he would have been the first to insist, an exaggeration. He started only twenty-five proceedings leading to indictments under the Sherman Act, while Taft began forty-five.⁷¹ The signifi-

⁶⁶ *Presidential Addresses*, Vol. IV, pp. 451-52.

⁶⁷ *Works*, Vol. XV, pp. 272-74.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 364.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 415.

⁷⁰ Beard and Beard, *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 572.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 569.

cance of Roosevelt's corporation activities lay in what he said rather than what he did. Even the spectacular fine of \$29,000,000 assessed by Federal Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis on April 13, 1907, against the Standard Oil Company of Indiana⁷² came to nothing. The higher courts set aside the penalty, and the Standard Oil Company paid nothing.

The fact is that Roosevelt would progress to a certain point in his program to ward off socialism and unrest, and then make energetic efforts to appease the right wing. Even the muckrakers, who had brought into the light so many of the evils on which Roosevelt acted, were to learn, in pained surprise, that he endorsed them with distinct reservations. In 1901, although he said nothing publicly, he expressed doubt that the indictment of Frank Norris against the Southern Pacific Railroad in California was accurate.⁷³ On March 17, 1906, when Speaker Cannon was the host at a dinner to the Gridiron Club, the President deprecated, quoting from *Pilgrim's Progress*, the man who fixed his mind only on things that were vile and debasing, on filth alone.⁷⁴ A few weeks later, he amplified his remarks, saying that he emphatically approved proper exposure of wrongdoing, but not sensationalism for its own sake.⁷⁵

But one muckraker—the term was original with Roosevelt—inspired the President to another brisk fight with Congress. On March 9, 1906, Roosevelt wrote Upton Sinclair, whose *The Jungle* had recently been published, that "I shall read it with interest," although Commissioner of Corporations Garfield believed the conclusions regarding the Chicago packing houses "too pessimistic." At the same time he directed Secretary of Agriculture Wilson to appoint an investigator who would confer with Sinclair and begin an inquiry.⁷⁶ Two examiners were appointed, James Bronson Reynolds and Charles P. Neill, and their disclosures moved the President to horrified action. Beveridge of Indiana introduced a bill permitting effective inspection of the packing houses on May 22, 1906, and it passed the Senate three days later. Then it slumbered in the lower house.⁷⁷

⁷² New York Times, Apr. 14, 1907.

⁷³ Wister, Owen, *Op. cit.*, p. 83.

⁷⁴ Washington Star, Mar. 18, 1906.

⁷⁵ Presidential Addresses, Vol. V, pp. 712-20.

⁷⁶ Roosevelt to James Wilson, Mar. 12, 1906.

⁷⁷ Sullivan, Mark, *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 538.

"... Really, Mr. Sinclair, you *must* keep your head,"⁷⁸ begged Roosevelt while the author of *The Jungle* insisted upon immediate action and while press agents for the packers were insinuating that Roosevelt's animus was due to his failure as a cattleman in Medora in 1886.⁷⁹ The packers, who once had so gladly supported Roosevelt for office, continued to exert pressure against passage of the bill, and he struck at them on June 4, 1906, by making public a report compiled by Reynolds and Neill. It was a loathsome document. It told of filth, disease, and gross carelessness in the packing houses. Tuberculosis was prevalent among the workers. Old bits of rope had been discovered in chopped meat about to be placed in cans. The buildings in which the work was done were dark, damp, and badly ventilated.⁸⁰

The folly of the packers was endless. Thomas E. Wilson, of the Nelson Morris Company, said that his plant was "as clean as any kitchen." He was confident that Reynolds and Neill, being men "of fine sensibilities," had been shocked into gross inaccuracies by the mere sight of blood.⁸¹ Then the President let it be known that this was only a "preliminary report," and that additional facts might be published unless the packers told their agents in the House that the bill should be passed.⁸² At the same time, because accounts of the Neill-Reynolds reports had been cabled abroad, it appeared probable that the export trade in American meat would suffer.⁸³ This economic argument, added to Roosevelt's threats of additional exposures, brought passage of the inspection bill on July 1, 1906.

The reform is illustrative of the degree to which the innovations for which Roosevelt received credit were suggested by others. Another instance was the battle for pure food. In 1883, Dr. Harvey Washington Wiley had been appointed chief chemist of the Department of Agriculture. By 1902 his "poison squad" of twelve young assistants was permitting experiments in the effect of adulterated foods and drugs to be made upon it.⁸⁴ Unfortunately, Dr. Wiley and

⁷⁸ Roosevelt to Sinclair, Apr. 10, 1906.

⁷⁹ New York *Tribune*, June 6, 1906.

⁸⁰ *Presidential Addresses*, Vol. V, pp. 772-75.

⁸¹ New York *Tribune*, June 7, 1906.

⁸² Sullivan, Mark, *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 540.

⁸³ New York *Tribune*, June 7, 8, 1906.

⁸⁴ Wiley, Harvey W., *Harvey W. Wiley, an Autobiography*, pp. 198-220.

the President irritated each other. Early in the administration, the pure-food enthusiast had been so foolish as to criticize Roosevelt's proposal for reduction of Cuban sugar tariffs and had very nearly been dismissed from the service.⁸⁵ He later felt that Roosevelt did not accord sufficiently firm support to those who enforced the law and that too much credit for its passage had been given to the White House.⁸⁶ On his part, the President believed that Dr. Wiley was a fanatic; but "I have such confidence in his integrity and zeal that I am anxious to back him up to the limit of my power wherever I can be sure that doing so won't do damage instead of good."⁸⁷

A degree of justice undoubtedly lay in the position of each. Roosevelt was not bashful in taking credit to which his title was clouded. Dr. Wiley was probably overeager. Certainly the Pure Food Bill would not have been passed on June 23, 1906, had not Roosevelt recommended some such law in December, 1905.⁸⁸ The outcry over the Neill-Reynolds report, which did not concern the Pure Food Bill directly, was the final influence toward its passage.

Another aspect of his program for the suppression of socialistic unrest remains: protection for labor against the excessive use of the injunction. If the attitude of the New York *Sun* toward labor . . . becomes the attitude of the Republican Party," he told Knox just after Election Day in 1904, "we shall some day go down before a radical and extreme Democracy with a crash, which will be disastrous to the nation. We must not only do justice, but be able to show that we are doing justice."⁸⁹

In 1905, in addition to suggesting employers' liability for the District of Columbia and an investigation of child labor, Roosevelt raised the question of limiting the power of the courts in defeating the aspirations of labor by means of the injunction.⁹⁰ In May, 1906, he said that he opposed having "any operation of the law turn into an engine of oppression against the wage worker."⁹¹ In his message to Congress, the President pointed to "grave abuses" possible because of this weapon in the hands of capital.⁹²

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 221, 231.

⁸⁷ Roosevelt to Peter Force, Jan. 7, 1909.

⁸⁸ *Works*, Vol. XV, p. 326.

⁸⁹ Roosevelt to Knox, Nov. 10, 1904.

⁹⁰ *Works*, Vol. XV, p. 284.

⁹¹ Roosevelt to William H. Moody, May 12, 1906.

⁹² *Works*, Vol. XV, p. 347.

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Roosevelt's passionate interest in the national forests, in reclamation of arid Western lands by irrigation, in conservation of water power and other natural resources, may well be considered as part of his campaign against the malefactors of great wealth. There can be little controversy regarding Roosevelt's contribution to the cause of conservation, although he was faintly jealous of credit given to Senator Francis G. Newlands of Nevada, a Democrat and therefore a dubious source of constructive work for good.⁹³ It is probable, too, that Roosevelt minimized the contribution of Senator Hanna, who had first become interested in irrigation in 1897.⁹⁴ On all these important matters, however, there is credit enough for all. In a letter written on June 8, 1902, Roosevelt had appealed to Speaker Cannon—"I do not believe I have ever before written to an individual legislator in favor of an original bill"—not to oppose the Newlands Act for irrigation in the West.

Roosevelt's interest never slackened. As governor of New York he had emphasized the necessity for forest reserves.⁹⁵ As President, it was a subject dwelt upon at length in all of his annual messages to Congress. The preservation of the forests and the irrigation of desert lands were part of the heritage of Roosevelt's own years in the West. His opposition to exploitation of water power was based on the conception, novel in that day, that this was the property of the people and should redound to their benefit. In 1903, when the Fifty-seventh Congress passed a bill awarding to one N. J. Thompson the right to build a dam and construct a power station at Muscle Shoals, Alabama—thus ancient are the issues of American politics—the President vetoed the bill:

... the ultimate effect of granting privileges of this kind . . . should be considered in a comprehensive way and . . . a general policy appropriate to the new conditions caused by the advance in electrical science should be adopted under which these valuable rights will not be practically given away, but will be disposed of with full competition in such a way as will best substantiate the public interest.⁹⁶

⁹³ Roosevelt to James Wilson, July 2, 1902.

⁹⁴ Beer, Thomas, *Op. cit.*, p. 257.

⁹⁵ *Works*, Vol. XV, pp. 21-22.

⁹⁶ *Toledo Blade*, Mar. 4, 1903.

Roosevelt told the story of conservation, competently and without the distortions that sometimes marked his writings, in his autobiography. The influence of Gifford Pinchot, which started when Roosevelt was governor, was the dominant one in the great and significant changes whereby the forests were placed under adequate supervision. The Newlands Act, passed in 1902 with Roosevelt's energetic assistance, provided within four years the irrigation of some 3,000,000 acres, and engineering projects nearly as great as the Panama Canal.⁹⁷ In the opinion of Senator LaFollette, who had been one of the allies in the work, conservation would stand as Roosevelt's greatest work. He had, said the Wisconsin Senator, started a world movement "for staying territorial waste and saving for the human race the things . . . on which alone a peaceful, progressive and happy race life can be founded."⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Muzzey, D. S., *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 398.

⁹⁸ *Autobiography*, pp. 393-422.

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PART VIII

PRELUDE AND FINALE

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THOMAS A. BAILEY

THOMAS A. BAILEY'S *Woodrow Wilson and the Peacemakers* is uniquely provocative among the literature describing America's role in the peace settlement following the First World War. It has given offense to both Wilson's friends and his enemies. Founded in a belief in the value of American participation in international organizations, it attacks the isolationists of 1919—indeed, it condemns isolationism in any year of the twentieth century. Yet it is a work whose main distinction lies in the blame it puts on Wilson's shoulders for the failure of the United States to ratify the Versailles Treaty. In short, while upholding vigorously Wilson's principles, it criticizes his actions.

The climax of the book is the Senate's rejection of membership in the League of Nations and the author's explanation of it. Bailey maintains that the crucial element in the situation was the character of the President. The same stubbornness and moral strength that enabled Wilson to persevere at Paris until he got the League established prevented him from accepting the compromises necessary for the ratification by the American government. This conclusion is based upon two fundamental assumptions: that these compromises—known as the Lodge Reservations—would not have destroyed the effectiveness of the League, and that they were acceptable to two thirds of the Senate, to the American people as a whole, and to the League members.

Bailey is firmly convinced of the truth of these assumptions. Blind to reality because of his moralism and his anger at the

opposition, Wilson believed them to be false and opposed any modification of the League's provisions. It was the President's firmest supporters, joined in strange alliance with the extreme isolationists, who defeated the hopes of a Senate majority to accept the League with an amended covenant.

One of the curiosities of this theme is that it not only makes something of a villain of Wilson but also contributes to a rather flattering view of Henry Cabot Lodge, the Republican leader usually taken to embody the combination of partisanship and stunted vision responsible for the Senate's refusal to ratify. Bailey makes clear Lodge's political motivations but credits him with a greater willingness to compromise than Wilson showed. Further, since Bailey does not believe that the Lodge reservations crippled the League, he is led, consciously or unconsciously, to create an impression of the Senator as the League's friend rather than its opponent.

Obviously, this treatment of the battle over ratification has called forth numerous criticisms. It has seemed perverse to many that more distinction was not made between Wilson's possible errors of judgment as opposed to the mistaken principles of his antagonists. To create the impression that Wilson's tactical blunders are as responsible for the League's defeat as was the isolationist bloc of "Irreconcilables" is to reduce the historical scene to a focus so narrow as to destroy perspective.

The question inevitably arises concerning the relative importance of these particular men and the general atmosphere in which they worked. Bailey gives some attention to the matter of public opinion. But his conclusion that the country stood behind a League with reservations appears to some critics to be based upon an inadequate examination of the broad trends working against American participation on any terms.

In his discussion of the rather technical problem of the extent to which the proposed changes nullified the League's covenant, Bailey is aided by the hindsight which comes from knowing how ineffective the organization became. There is little

doubt that Wilson's excessive expectations for the League's success, as well as his self-righteousness, conditioned his response to the plea to compromise. Nevertheless, the fact that the League was a failure does not preclude the possibility of its having been even more ineffectual. Although no one will deny that the membership of the United States would have strengthened the League, there are many who agree with Wilson that Lodge's reservations would have weakened it.

There is more agreement over the morals which Bailey intends to be drawn from his study than there is over the details of the narrative on which he bases them. By the time this book was published, in 1945, it was already reasonably clear to most that the United States could ill afford to withdraw after the Second World War as it had the First World War. Franklin Roosevelt was highly conscious of Wilson's tactical errors and determined not to repeat them. Although some historians may disapprove of the severity of Bailey's censure of the President, not many deny that Wilson contributed to the partisanship which permeated the debates of 1919. Even fewer wish to challenge the author's observation that domestic politics should not guide foreign policy and that compromise in unessentials helps to establish national unity.

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The Supreme Infanticide

"As a friend of the President, as one who has loyally followed him, I solemnly declare to him this morning: If you want to kill your own child because the Senate straightens out its crooked limbs, you must take the responsibility and accept the verdict of history." SENATOR ASHURST of Arizona (*Democrat*), March 11, 1920.

1

THE TREATY was now dead, as far as America was concerned. Who had killed it?

The vital role of the loyal Democrats must be reemphasized. If all of them who professed to want the treaty had voted "Yea," it would have passed with more than a dozen votes to spare. If the strait-jacket of party loyalty had not been involved, the necessary two-thirds could easily have been mustered.

In the previous November, the Democrats might have voted against the treaty (as they did) even without White House pressure. But this time pressure had to be applied to force them into line, and even in the face of Wilsonian wrath almost half of them bolted. On the day of the final balloting the newsmen observed that two Cabinet members (Burleson and Daniels), possibly acting at the President's direction, were on the floor of the Senate, buttonholing waverers. The day after the fateful voting Hitchcock wrote Wilson that it had required the "most energetic efforts" on his part to *prevent a majority of the Democrats from surrendering to Lodge*.

Desertion of the President, as we have seen, is no light offense in the political world, especially when he has declared himself emphatically. Senators do not ordinarily court political suicide. Wil-

From *Woodrow Wilson and the Peacemakers*, by Thomas Bailey, copyright 1947 by The Macmillan Company and used with their permission.

son still had the patronage bludgeon in his hands, and having more than a trace of vindictiveness, he could oppose renegade senators when they ran again, and in fact did so.

Many of the loyal Democrats were up for reelection in 1920. They certainly were aware of the effects of party treachery on their political fortunes. They knew—or many of them knew—that they were killing the treaty; they made no real effort to revive it; they must have wanted it killed—at least until after the November election.

One striking fact stands out like a lighthouse. With the exception of Hitchcock of Nebraska, Johnson of South Dakota, and Thomas of Colorado, *every single one of the twenty-three senators who stood loyally with Wilson in March came from south of the Mason and Dixon line.* Only four of the “disloyal” twenty-one represented states that had seceded in 1860–1861. At the polls, as well as on the floor of the Senate, decent southern Democrats voted “the way their fathers shot.” As between bothersome world responsibility on the one hand, and loyalty to President, party, section, and race on the other, there was but one choice. Perhaps world leadership would come eventually anyhow.

Democratic senators like Walsh of Montana and Ashurst of Arizona were not from the South. When the issue was clearly drawn between loyalty to party and loyalty to country, their consciences bade them choose the greater good. Ashurst had gone down the line in supporting Wilson; but several days before the final vote he declared, “I am just as much opposed to a White House irreconcilable as I am to a Lodge irreconcilable.”

2

A word now about public opinion.

In March, as in November, more than 80 per cent of the senators professed to favor the treaty with some kind of reservations. All the polls and other studies indicate that this was roughly the sentiment of the country. Yet the senators were unable to scrape together a two-thirds vote for any one set of reservations.

The reaction of many newspaper editors, as before, was to cry out against the shame of it all—this indictment of the “capacity of

our democracy to do business." We had astonished the world by our ability to make war; we now astonished the world with our "imbecility" in trying to make peace. How could we blame other countries for thinking us "a nation of boobs and bigots"? The *Louisville Courier-Journal* (Democrat), referring to our broken promises to the Allies, cried that we stood betrayed as "cravens and crooks," "hypocrites and liars."

Partisan Republican newspapers loudly blamed the stiff-backed Wilson and his "me-too" senators. Two wings of "irreconcilables"—the Wilsonites and the "bitter-enders"—had closed in to execute a successful pincers movement against the treaty. The *New York Tribune* (Independent Republican) condemned the "inefficiency, all-sufficiency and self-sufficiency of our self-named only negotiator," Woodrow Wilson. If the treaty died, said the *Tribune*, the handle of the dagger that pierced its heart would bear the "initials 'W. W.'"

If Republicans scolded Democrats, Democrats scolded Republicans. Lodge and his cheap political tricks were roundly condemned, and the general conclusion was that "the blood of the Treaty stains the floor of the Republican wigwam." A few of the less partisan Democratic journals openly conceded that Wilson's obstinacy had something to do with the final result. William Jennings Bryan asserted from the platform that this "most colossal crime against our nation and the civilized world in all history" made his "blood boil." He began a vigorous campaign against the two-thirds rule in the Senate. "A majority of Congress can declare war," he cried; "it ought to be as easy to end a war as to begin it."

The leading liberal journals, as before, were sadly happy. They rejoiced that the result would clear the way for a renovation of the treaty, but they regretted that the pact had been defeated as a result of partisanship rather than as a result of the betrayal of Wilson's promises.

An impressive number of the more discerning editors deplored the fact that the issue was now in the dirty hands of politicians. An electoral referendum, it was felt, would merely confuse the issue; such a canvass could not possibly reveal anything more than was already known, namely, that *an overwhelming majority of the people wanted the treaty with some kind of reservations.*

3

Is it true that the invalid in the White House really strangled the treaty to death with his own enfeebled hands?

It is seldom that statesmen have a second chance—a second guess. They decide on a course of action, and the swift current of events bears them downstream from the starting point. Only rarely does the stream reverse itself and carry them back.

In November, Wilson had decided that he wanted deadlock, because he reasoned that deadlock would arouse public opinion and force the Senate to do his bidding. The tidal wave of public opinion did surge in, and Wilson got his second chance. But he threw it away, first by spurning compromise (except on his terms), and then by spurning the Lodge reservations.

There had been much more justification for Wilson's course in November than in March. In November he was sick, secluded, was fed censored news, and was convinced by Hitchcock that the strategy of deadlock was sound. In March, he was much improved in health, far less secluded, more in touch with the press and with the currents of opinion, though probably still not enough. He consulted even less with the Senate, presumably because he had made up his mind in advance to oppose the Lodge reservations. In November, there was a fair possibility of reconsideration; in March, it was clear that the only possibility lay in making the League an issue in the coming campaign. Wilson, with his broad knowledge of government and politics, should have seen that this hope was largely if not completely illusory. Perhaps he would have seen it had he not been blinded by his feeling for Lodge.

The evidence is convincing that Wilson wanted the issue cast into the hurly-burly of politics. He could not accept Lodge's terms; Lodge would not accept his terms. The only possible chance of beating the senator—and this was slim indeed—was to win a resounding mandate in 1920.

Yet this strategy, as already noted, meant further delay. At Paris, the feeling at times had been, "Better a bad treaty today than a good treaty four months hence." Europe was still in chaos, and increasingly in need of America's helping hand. Well might the Europeans cry, "Better a treaty with the Lodge reservations today

than a probable treaty without reservations after the election." Or as Dr. Frank Crane wrote in *Current Opinion*, "It is vastly more needful that some sort of League be formed, *any sort*, than that it be formed *perfectly*." (Italics Crane's.)

Yet Wilson, for the reasons indicated, could not see all this clearly. Four days after the fatal vote he wrote Hitchcock, praising him for having done all in his power to protect the honor of the nation and the peace of the world against the Republican majority.

Mrs. Wilson, no doubt reflecting her husband's views, later wrote, "My conviction is that Mr. Lodge put the world back fifty years, and that at his door lies the wreckage of human hopes and the peril to human lives that afflict mankind today."

4

To the very end Wilson was a fighter. When the Scotch-Irish in him became aroused, he would nail his colors to the mast. He said in 1916 that he was "playing for the verdict of mankind." His conception of duty as he saw it was overpowering. He once remarked that if he were a judge, and it became his duty to sentence his own brother to the gallows, he would do so—and afterwards die of a broken heart.

It is well to have principles; it is well to have a noble conception of duty. But Wilson, as he became warmed up in a fight, tended to get things out of focus and to lose a proper sense of values.

The basic issue in 1920 was the Hitchcock reservations or the Lodge reservations. Wilson accepted those of Hitchcock while rejecting those of Lodge, which, he said, completely nullified the treaty and betrayed his promises to the Allies and to the American dead.

This, as we have seen, was a gross exaggeration. Minds no less acute than Wilson's, and less clouded with sickness and pride, denied that the Lodge reservations completely nullified the treaty. To the man in the street—in so far as he gave the dispute thought—there was little discernible difference between the two sets of reservations. How could one decry statements which merely reaffirmed the basic principles of the Constitution and of our foreign policy? To a vast number of Americans the Lodge reservations, far from nullifying the treaty, actually improved it. This was so apparent to

even the most loyal Democrats in the Senate that Wilson could barely keep them in line.

In the final analysis the treaty was slain in the house of its friends rather than in the house of its enemies. In the final analysis it was not the two-thirds rule, or the "irreconcilables," or Lodge, or the "strong" and "mild reservationists," but Wilson and his docile following who delivered the fatal stab. If the President had been permitted to vote he would have sided with Borah, Brandegee, Johnson, and the other "bitter-enders"—though for entirely different reasons.

Wilson had said that the reservation to Article X was a knife thrust at the heart of the Covenant. Ironically, he parried this knife thrust, and stuck his own dagger, not into the heart of the Covenant, but into the entire treaty.

This was the supreme act of infanticide. With his own sickly hands Wilson slew his own brain child—or the one to which he had contributed so much.

This was the supreme paradox. He who had forced the Allies to write the League into the treaty, unwrote it; he who had done more than any other man to make the Covenant, unmade it—at least so far as America was concerned. And by his action, he contributed powerfully to the ultimate undoing of the League, and with it the high hopes of himself and mankind for an organization to prevent World War II.

5

The preceding dogmatic observations are of course qualified by the phrase, "in the last analysis."

Many elements enter into a log jam. Among them are the width of the stream, the depth of the stream, the swiftness of the current, the presence of boulders, the size of the logs, and the absence of enough lumberjacks. No one of these factors can be solely responsible for the pile-up.

Many elements entered into the legislative log jam of March, 1920. Among them were isolationism, partisanship, senatorial prerogative, confusion, apathy, personal pride, and private feuds. No one of them was solely responsible for the pile-up. *But as the pile-up finally developed, there was only one lumberjack who could break it, and that was Woodrow Wilson.* If at any time before the final vote he

had told the Senate Democrats to support the treaty with the Lodge reservations, or even if he had merely told them that they were on their own, the pact would almost certainly have been approved. So "in the last analysis" the primary responsibility for the failure in March rested with Wilson.

What about Lodge? If the treaty would have passed by Wilson's surrendering, is it not equally true that it would have passed by Lodge's surrendering?

The answer is probably "Yes," but the important point is that Lodge had far less responsibility for getting the treaty through than Wilson. If Lodge had yielded, he probably would have created a schism within his ranks. His ultimate responsibility was to keep the party from breaking to pieces, and in this he succeeded. Wilson's ultimate responsibility was to get the treaty ratified, and in this he failed. With Lodge, as with any truly partisan leader, the party comes before country; with the President the country should come before party, though unhappily it often does not.

It is possible that Wilson saw all this—but not clearly enough. He might have been willing to compromise if his adversary had been any other than Lodge. But so bitter was the feeling between the two men that Wilson, rather than give way, grasped at the straw of the election of 1920.

Lodge did not like Wilson either, but he made more of a show of compromising than the President. He actually supported and drove through amendments to his original reservations which were in line with Wilson's wishes, and he probably would have gone further had the "irreconcilables" not been on his back. He fought the crippling Irish reservation, as well as others supported by the "bitter-enders." Finally, he gave the Democrats a fair chance to reconsider their vote and get on the bandwagon, but they spurned it.

If Lodge's words mean anything, and if his actions were not those of a monstrous hypocrite, he actually tried to get the treaty through with his reservations. When he found that he could not, he washed his hands of the whole business in disgust.

The charge is frequently made that, if Wilson had yielded to his adversary, Lodge would have gleefully piled on more reservations until Wilson, further humiliated, would have had to throw out the whole thing.

The strongest evidence for this view is a circumstantial story which Secretary Houston relates. During a Cabinet meeting Wilson was called to the telephone, and agreed to make certain concessions agreeable to Lodge. Before adjournment the telephone rang again, and word came that Lodge would not adhere to his original proposal.

This story is highly improbable, because Wilson attended no Cabinet meetings between September 2, 1919, and April 13, 1920. By the latter date, all serious attempts at compromise had been dropped; by the earlier date the treaty was still before the Senate committee, and the Lodge reservations, though in an embryonic stage, were yet unborn. But, even if the story is true, it merely proves that Lodge veered about, as he frequently did under "irreconcilable" pressure.

In March, as in November, all Wilson had to do was to send over Postmaster General Burleson to the Senate a few minutes before the final vote with the quiet word that the Democrats were to vote "Yea." The treaty would then have passed with the Lodge reservations, and Lodge could hardly have dared incur for himself or his party the odium of moving to reconsider for the purpose of screwing on more reservations. Had he tried to do so, the "mild reservationists" almost certainly would have blocked him.

6

A few days after the disastrous final vote, Wilson's only comment to Tumulty was, "They have shamed us in the eyes of the world." If his previous words said what he really meant, he was hardly more ashamed by the defeat of the treaty than by the addition of the Lodge reservations. In his eyes it all amounted to the same thing.

If the treaty had passed, would the President have been willing to go through with the exchange of ratifications? Would he not have pocketed it, as he threatened to do prior to the November vote?

Again, if Wilson's words may be taken at their face value, this is what he would have done. He had not backed down from his pre-November position. His Jackson Day message and his letter to Hitchcock made it unmistakably clear that he preferred the uncertainties of a political campaign to the certainties of ratification with the Lodge reservations. The addition of the indefensible Irish reser-

vation provided even stronger justification for pocketing the entire pact.

It is probable that some of the loyal Democrats voted as they did partly because they were convinced that Wilson was going to pigeon-hole the treaty anyhow. From their point of view it was better that the odium for defeat should seemingly rest on Lodge rather than on their President. It also seems clear that Wilson preferred, as in November, to have the blood of the treaty on the Senate doorstep rather than on his. As he wrote to Secretary Colby, on April 2, 1920, the slain pact lay heavily on the consciences of those who had stabbed it, and he was quite willing to have it lie there until those consciences were either awakened or crushed.

Yet it is one thing to say, just before Senate action, "I will pocket the treaty." It is another, after the pact is approved and sent to the White House, to assume this tremendous responsibility. The eyes of the world are upon the President; he is the only man keeping the nation out of the peace which it so urgently needs; he is the one man standing in the way of the rehabilitation which the world so desperately demands. Public pressure to ratify in such a case would be enormous—probably irresistible.

Some years later Senator Hitchcock said that in the event of senatorial approval Wilson would possibly have waited for the November election. If he had won, he would have worked for the removal of the Lodge reservations; if he had lost, then the compulsion to go through with ratification would have become overpowering. By November more than six months would have passed, and by that time Wilson might have developed a saner perspective.

But this is all speculation. Wilson gave orders that the treaty was to be killed in the Senate chamber. And there it died.

7

One other line of inquiry must be briefly pursued. Is it true, as some writers allege, that the thirty-odd Allied signatories of the original treaty would have rejected the Lodge reservations when officially presented? We recall that under the terms of the preamble these nations were privileged to acquiesce silently or file objections.

One will never know the answer to this question, because Wilson

denied the other signatories a chance to act. But it seems proper to point to certain probabilities.

One or more of the Latin American nations might have objected to the reservation regarding the then hated Monroe Doctrine. Yet the Monroe Doctrine would have continued to exist anyhow; it was already in the Covenant; and these neighboring republics might well have swallowed their pride in the interest of world peace.

Italy probably would have acquiesced, and the evidence is strong that France would have done likewise. The Japanese could not completely overlook the Shantung reservation, but it was generally recognized in their press as meaningless, and for this reason it might have been tolerated, though not without some loss of face. It is noteworthy that the most important Japanese newspapers regretted the Senate stalemate as an encouragement to world instability, particularly in China.

Great Britain probably would have been the chief objector. The reservation on Ireland was highly offensive but completely innocuous, for the British lion had long endured Irish-American tail-twistings in pained but dignified silence. The reservation on six-to-one was a slap at the loyal and sacrificing Dominions, but it did not mean that their vote was to be taken away. Moreover, the contingency envisaged by this proviso was unlikely to arise very often, and in the long run would doubtless have proved inconsequential.

In sum, there were only two or three reservations to which the outside powers could seriously object. If they had objected, it is probable that a satisfactory adjustment could have been threshed out through diplomatic channels. For when it became clear that only a few phrases stood between the United States and peace, the dictates of common sense and the pressure of public opinion probably would have led to an acceptable compromise. If the Senate had refused to give ground in such a case, then the onus would have been clearly on it and not on Wilson.

The World Court is a case in point. In 1926 the Senate voted to join, but attached five reservations, four of which were accepted by the other powers. By 1935 a compromise was worked out on the fifth, but an isolationist uprising led by William Randolph Hearst and Father Coughlin turned what seemed to be a favorable vote

in the Senate into a narrow defeat for the World Court. The one-third minority again triumphed, with the aging Borah and Johnson and Norris and Gore still voting their fears and prejudices.

But the World Court analogy must not be pressed too far. In 1920 Europe was in a desperate condition; the only real hope for a successful League lay in American cooperation. Unless the United States would shoulder its obligations the whole treaty system was in danger of collapse. In 1926 the powers could afford to haggle over the World Court; in 1920 there was far less temptation to haggle while Europe burned. The European nations were under strong compulsion to swallow their pride, or at the very worst not to drive too hard a bargain in seeking adjustment.

But this again is pure speculation. Wilson never gave the other powers a chance to act on the reservations, though Colonel House and others urged him to. He assumed this terrific responsibility all by himself. While thinking that he was throwing the onus on the consciences of the senators, he was in fact throwing a large share of the onus upon his own bent shoulders.

8

What were the reactions of our recent brothers in arms on the other side of the Atlantic?

The British viewed the Senate debacle with mixed emotions. The result had been a foregone conclusion, and there was some relief in having an end to senatorial uncertainty—at least this stage of it. Some journals were inclined to blame the two-thirds rule; others, the unbending doctrinaire in the White House. The London *Times* sorrowfully concluded that all the processes of peace would have to be suspended pending the outcome of the November election.

The French were shocked, though hardly surprised. The Paris *Liberté* aptly referred to the state of anarchy existing between the executive and the legislative in America. Other journals, smarting under Wilson's recent blast against French militarism, blamed the autocrat in the White House. "At the most troubled moment in history," giped the Paris *Matin*, "America has a sick President, an amateur Secretary of State, and no Treaty of Peace. A President in the clouds, a Secretary of State in the bushes, and a treaty in the cabbage patch. What a situation!"

But the French did not completely abandon hope that America might yet honor her commitments. Meanwhile they would keep their powder dry and pursue the militaristic course which widened the growing rift between Britain and France, and which proved so fatal to the peace of Europe in the 1930's. The French finally became disgusted with German excuses (which were probably encouraged by America's defection), and in April, 1920, the month after the Senate rejected the treaty, their tanks rumbled into the Ruhr and occupied several German cities as hostages for reparations payments. Bullets were fired, and some blood was shed. This was but a dress rehearsal for the catastrophic invasion of the Ruhr in 1923.

The action—or rather inaction—of the United States had other tragic consequences. It encouraged German radicals in their determination to tear up the treaty: they were finding unwitting collaborators in Senator Borah and President Wilson. It delayed by many months, as British Foreign Secretary Curzon openly charged, the treaty with Turkey, thus giving the "Sick Man of Europe" (Turkey) a chance to prove that he was the "Slick Man of Europe." It held up the economic and moral rehabilitation of the Continent, and even hampered the work of relief then going forward. It further disillusioned the liberals of Europe and others who had clung to Wilson as the major prophet of a new order. It gave new comfort to the forces of disorder everywhere. It left the United States discredited, isolated, shorn of its prestige, and branded as a hypocrite and renegade. It marked the first unbridgeable rift in the ranks of the victorious Allies, a coalition that might have kept the peace. Instead they now went their separate ways, perhaps not as enemies, but certainly no longer as close friends. The United States was the first to break completely away.

America—and the world—paid a high price for the collapse of the treaty-making process in Washington. We are still paying it.

9

One final question. Who won after all these months of parliamentary jockeying?

Lodge the master parliamentarian had not won—that is, if he really wanted the treaty with his reservations. As in November, he was unable to keep the "irreconcilables" in line on the crucial vote,

and he was unable to muster a two-thirds majority. He finally had to confess failure of leadership, except in so far as he prevented a schism.

The Republican party had not won. Lodge had avoided a serious split with the "bitter-enders" by knuckling under when they laid down the law. But the Republican leaders did not really want the issue in the campaign, and they had made strong efforts to keep it out. Now it was on their hands to cause them no end of embarrassment.

Wilson had not won. He has been praised for having kept the party ranks intact, and for having retained undisputed leadership of his following. But the Democrats in the Senate split 21 for the treaty to 23 against it, and that is hardly holding one's followers in line. Wilson lost irreparably because he did not get his treaty, even with reservations, and because he was doomed to lose again by insisting on a referendum where there could be no referendum.

The Democrats had not won. The treaty issue had caused a serious rift in the Senate, and Bryan, who was still a great leader, was on the rampage. Except for Wilson and some of his "yes men," there were few Democratic leaders who wanted this troublesome issue catapulted into the campaign. Yet there it was.

The United States had not won. It had won the war, to be sure; but it was now kicking the fruits of the victory back under the peace table. We had helped turn Europe into a scrap heap, and now we were scrapping the treaty. We were going to stand by the Allies—with our arms folded. We were throwing away the only hope of averting World War II.

The real victor was international anarchy.

FREDERICK LEWIS ALLEN

AS THE HISTORIAN comes closer to the present, he is confronted by both new opportunities and added obstacles. Whereas the chroniclers of remote times must search for every scrap of evidence, the recent past yields an embarrassing richness of material. Instead of worrying about whether his research has been exhaustive, the historian must concern himself with the development of sampling techniques which will permit him to get an accurate picture of the whole from a partial examination of the evidence.

Historians of the period after the First World War share the knowledge and insight which comes from having lived during the years they describe, but they have difficulty shedding the personal feelings which they experienced as participants. The record left by contemporary historians of other postwar periods does not inspire confidence in the ability of today's writers to be accurate in their analyses of the modern era. One recalls the patriotic distortion of the early accounts of the Revolution, the sectional prejudice of the Reconstruction historians, and the myopic nationalism which characterized the first narratives of the war with Spain. Such a series of failures suggests that the intention to be objective does not guarantee objectivity.

Nevertheless, one turns with at least a modicum of assurance to Frederick Lewis Allen's *Only Yesterday* for a description of life in America during the 1920's. Published in 1931, the book continues to enjoy a wide audience, and recent informal histories of the same period are surprisingly similar in their tone

and emphasis. Further, since it is primarily descriptive rather than analytical, its usefulness is not dependent upon judgments, which might have been too quick, but upon a more durable foundation of facts.

In such a work, the author's individual interpretation does not lie on the surface but must be sought indirectly in his selection of material and the emphasis which he gives to some events at the expense of others. What interests Allen most is change rather than continuity, the individual characteristics of the 1920's rather than the long-term developments of American culture. With a sureness of touch revealing his journalistic training, he seizes upon the strange and the dramatic and presents a lively picture which most readers have found both entertaining and informative.

There is little doubt of the accuracy of the facts which he presents, but there is some question concerning their meaning. The world of Wall Street and Red Grange, of Bruce Barton, H. L. Mencken, and Al Capone was undoubtedly part of America—certainly the most publicized part. But can this part be taken for the whole? Apparently, Allen's view that the 1920's formed a distinct era in American history led him to overemphasize the conspicuous personalities and spectacular events which gave the period its distinctiveness. In describing what was unique, he does not entirely fulfill his promise to "reveal the fundamental trends in our national life and national thought." After the strikes of 1919, labor almost entirely disappears from his pages; the millions who spent their lives in farming communities are largely overlooked. There is little about domestic prices or American investments overseas.

The author's desire to set these years apart also leads him to a rather exaggerated emphasis on the prosperity of the era. By inference, one might come to believe that every closet housed a raccoon coat. An entire chapter is devoted to the Wall Street boom, but only a few paragraphs are concerned with the sick industries of the period. In the first chapter, the reader is intro-

duced to a "Mr. Smith," whose daily routine is used to describe American society in 1919. But when "Mr. Smith" goes to luncheon at "his club" and joins his wife at a tea dance after work, it is obvious that most Americans could not follow him.

Yet the incompleteness of the work hardly destroys its value. When the book is considered for what it is, rather than for what it is not, one finds much to praise. If Allen describes the prosperousness of the 1920's, he is even more successful in depicting its spiritual poverty. Instead of presenting a fond reminiscence of the days of easy profits, he reveals the essential shallowness and the sense of insecurity which characterized many of the people who shared in those profits. Since it was Allen's intention to supply an obituary to an era, perhaps the study is necessarily fragmentary. What was healthy about these years is the other, larger fragment which constitutes America's permanent endowment.

Coolidge Prosperity

BUSINESS was booming when Warren Harding died, and in a primitive Vermont farmhouse, by the light of an old-fashioned kerosene lamp, Colonel John Coolidge administered to his son Calvin the oath of office as President of the United States. The hopeless depression of 1921 had given way to the hopeful improvement of 1922 and the rushing revival of 1923.

The prices of common stocks, to be sure, suggested no unreasonable optimism. On August 2, 1923, the day of Harding's death, United States Steel (paying a five-dollar dividend) stood at 87, Atchison (paying six dollars) at 95, New York Central (paying

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seven) at 97, and American Telephone and Telegraph (paying nine) at 122; and the total turnover for the day on the New York Stock Exchange amounted to only a little over 600,000 shares. The Big Bull Market was still far in the future. Nevertheless the tide of prosperity was in full flood.

Pick up one of those graphs with which statisticians measure the economic ups and downs of the Post-war Decade. You will find that the line of business activity rises to a jagged peak in 1920, drops precipitously into a deep valley in late 1920 and 1921, climbs uncertainly upward through 1922 to another peak at the middle of 1923, dips somewhat in 1924 (but not nearly so far as in 1921), rises again in 1925 and 1926, dips momentarily but slightly toward the end of 1927, and then zigzags up to a perfect Everest of prosperity in 1929—only to plunge down at last into the bottomless abyss of 1930 and 1931.

Hold the graph at arm's-length and glance at it again, and you will see that the clefts of 1924 and 1927 are mere indentations in a lofty and irregular plateau which reaches from early 1923 to late 1929. That plateau represents nearly seven years of unparalleled plenty; nearly seven years during which men and women might be disillusioned about politics and religion and love, but believed that at the end of the rainbow there was at least a pot of negotiable legal tender consisting of the profits of American industry and American salesmanship; nearly seven years during which the business man was, as Stuart Chase put it, "the dictator of our destinies," ousting "the statesman, the priest, the philosopher, as the creator of standards of ethics and behavior" and becoming "the final authority on the conduct of American society." For nearly seven years the prosperity band-wagon rolled down Main Street.

Not everyone could manage to climb aboard this wagon. Mighty few farmers could get so much as a fingerhold upon it. Some dairy-men clung there, to be sure, and fruit-growers and truck-gardeners. For prodigious changes were taking place in the national diet as the result of the public's discovery of the useful vitamin, the propaganda for a more varied menu, and the invention of better methods of shipping perishable foods. Between 1919 and 1926 the national production of milk and milk products increased by one-third and that of ice-cream alone took a 45-per-cent jump. Between 1919 and 1928,

as families learned that there were vitamins in celery, spinach, and carrots, and became accustomed to serving fresh vegetables the year round (along with fresh fruits), the acreage of nineteen commercial truck vegetable crops nearly doubled. But the growers of staple crops such as wheat and corn and cotton were in a bad way. Their foreign markets had dwindled under competition from other countries. Women were wearing less and less cotton. Few agricultural raw materials were used in the new economy of automobiles and radios and electricity. And the more efficient the poor farmer became, the

thousands of automobile owners had never even lifted the hood to see what the engine looked like. Now that closed cars were in quantity production, furthermore, the motorist had no need of Spartan blood, even in January. And the stylish new models were a delight to the eye. At the beginning of the decade most cars had been somber in color, but with the invention of pyroxylin finishes they broke out (in 1925 and 1926) into a whole rainbow of colors, from Florentine cream to Versailles violet. Bodies were swung lower, expert designers sought new harmonies of line, balloon tires came in, and at last even Henry Ford capitulated to style and beauty.

If any sign had been needed of the central place which the automobile had come to occupy in the mind and heart of the average American, it was furnished when the Model A Ford was brought out in December, 1927. Since the previous spring, when Henry Ford had shut down his gigantic plant, scrapped his Model T and the thousands of machines which brought it into being, and announced that he was going to put a new car on the market, the country had been in a state of suspense. Obviously he would have to make drastic changes. Model T had been losing to Chevrolet its leadership in the enormous low-priced-car market, for the time had come when people were no longer content with ugliness and a maximum speed of forty or forty-five miles an hour; no longer content, either, to roar slowly uphill with a weary left foot jammed against the low-speed pedal while robin's-egg blue Chevrolets swept past in second. Yet equally obviously Henry Ford was the mechanical genius of the age. What miracle would he accomplish?

Rumor after rumor broke into the front pages of the newspapers. So intense was the interest that even the fact that an automobile dealer in Brooklyn had "learned something of the new car through a telegram from his brother Henry" was headline stuff. When the editor of the Brighton, Michigan, *Weekly Argus* actually snapped a photograph of a new Ford out for a trial spin, newspaper-readers pounced on the picture and avidly discussed its every line. The great day arrived when this newest product of the inventive genius of the age was to be shown to the public. The Ford Motor Company was running in 2,000 daily newspapers a five-day series of full-page advertisements at a total cost of \$1,300,000; and everyone who could read was reading them. On December 2, 1927, when Model A was un-

veiled, one million people—so the *Herald-Tribune* figured—tried to get into the Ford headquarters in New York to catch a glimpse of it; as Charles Merz later reported in his life of Ford, “one hundred thousand people flocked into the showrooms of the Ford Company in Detroit; mounted police were called out to patrol the crowds in Cleveland; in Kansas City so great a mob stormed Convention Hall that platforms had to be built to lift the new car high enough for everyone to see it.” So it went from one end of the United States to the other. Thousands of orders piled up on the Ford books for Niagara Blue roadsters and Arabian Sand phaetons. For weeks and months, every new Ford that appeared on the streets drew a crowd. To the motor-minded American people the first showing of a new kind of automobile was no matter of merely casual or commercial interest. It was one of the great events of the year 1927; not so thrilling as Lindbergh’s flight, but rivaling the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, the Hall-Mills murder trial, the Mississippi flood, and the Dempsey-Tunney fight at Chicago in its capacity to arouse public excitement.

In 1919 there had been 6,771,000 passenger cars in service in the United States; by 1929 there were no less than 23,121,000. There you have possibly the most potent statistic of Coolidge Prosperity. As a footnote to it I suggest the following. Even as early as the end of 1923 there were two cars for every three families in “Middletown,” a typical American city. The Lynds and their investigators interviewed 123 working-class families of “Middletown” and found that 60 of them had cars. Of these 60, 26 lived in such shabby-looking houses that the investigators thought to ask whether they had bathtubs, and discovered that as many as 21 of the 26 had none. The automobile came even before the tub!

And as it came, it changed the face of America. Villages which had once prospered because they were “on the railroad” languished with economic anæmia; villages on Route 61 bloomed with garages, filling stations, hot-dog stands, chicken-dinner restaurants, tearooms, tourists’ rests, camping sites, and affluence. The interurban trolley perished, or survived only as a pathetic anachronism. Railroad after railroad gave up its branch lines, or saw its revenues slowly dwindling under the competition of mammoth interurban busses and trucks snorting along six-lane concrete highways. The whole country

was covered with a network of passenger bus-lines. In thousands of towns, at the beginning of the decade a single traffic officer at the junction of Main Street and Central Street had been sufficient for the control of traffic. By the end of the decade, what a difference!—red and green lights, blinkers, one-way streets, boulevard stops, stringent and yet more stringent parking ordinances—and still a shining flow of traffic that backed up for blocks along Main Street every Saturday and Sunday afternoon. Slowly but surely the age of steam was yielding to the gasoline age.

3

The radio manufacturer occupied a less important seat than the automobile manufacturer on the prosperity band-wagon, but he had the distinction of being the youngest rider. You will remember that there was no such thing as radio broadcasting to the public until the autumn of 1920, but that by the spring of 1922 radio had become a craze—as much talked about as Mah Jong was to be the following year or cross-word puzzles the year after. In 1922 the sales of radio sets, parts, and accessories amounted to \$60,000,000. People wondered what would happen when the edge wore off the novelty of hearing a jazz orchestra in Schenectady or in Davenport, Iowa, play “Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Shean.” What actually did happen is suggested by the cold figures of total annual radio sales for the next few years:

1922—\$ 60,000,000	(as we have just seen)
1923—\$136,000,000	
1924—\$358,000,000	
1925—\$430,000,000	
1926—\$506,000,000	
1927—\$425,600,000	
1928—\$650,550,000	
1929—\$842,548,000	(an increase over the 1922 figures of 1,400 per cent!)

Don't hurry past those figures. Study them a moment, remembering that whenever there is a dip in the curve of national prosperity there is likely to be a dip in the sales of almost every popular commodity. There was a dip in national prosperity in 1927, for instance; do you see what it did to radio sales? But there was also a dip in 1924, a worse one in fact. Yet radio sales made in that year the largest

proportional increase in the whole period. Why? Well, for one thing, that was the year in which the embattled Democrats met at Madison Square Garden in New York to pick a standard-bearer, and the deadlock between the hosts of McAdoo and the hosts of Al Smith lasted day after day after day, and millions of Americans heard through loud-speakers the lusty cry of, "Alabama, twenty-four votes for Underwoo—ood!" and discovered that a political convention could be a grand show to listen to and that a seat by the radio was as good as a ticket to the Garden. Better, in fact; for at any moment you could turn a knob and get "Barney Google" or "It Ain't Gonna Rain No More" by way of respite. At the age of three and a half years, radio broadcasting had attained its majority.

Behind those figures of radio sales lies a whole chapter of the life of the Post-war Decade: radio penetrating every third home in the country; giant broadcasting stations with nation-wide hook-ups; tenement-house roofs covered with forests of antennæ; Roxy and his Gang, the Happiness Boys, the A & P Gypsies, and Rudy Vallee crooning from antique Florentine cabinet sets; Graham McNamee's voice, which had become more familiar to the American public than that of any other citizen of the land, shouting across your living-room and mine: "*And he did it! Yes, sir, he did it! It's a touchdown! Boy, I want to tell you this is one of the finest games . . .*"; the Government belatedly asserting itself in 1927 to allocate wavelengths among competing radio stations; advertisers paying huge sums for the privilege of introducing Beethoven with a few well-chosen words about yeast or toothpaste; and Michael Meehan personally conducting the common stock of the Radio Corporation of America from a 1928 low of 85¼ to a 1929 high of 549.

There were other riders on the prosperity band-wagon. Rayon, cigarettes, refrigerators, telephones, chemical preparations (especially cosmetics), and electrical devices of various sorts all were in growing demand. While the independent storekeeper struggled to hold his own, the amount of retail business done in chain stores and department stores jumped by leaps and bounds. For every \$100 worth of business done in 1919, by 1927 the five-and-ten-cent chains were doing \$260 worth, the cigar chains \$153 worth, the drug chains \$224 worth, and the grocery chains \$387 worth. Mrs. Smith no longer patronized her "naborhood" store; she climbed into her two-thou-

sand dollar car to drive to the red-fronted chain grocery and save twenty-seven cents on her daily purchases. The movies prospered, sending their celluloid reels all over the world and making Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Gloria Swanson, Rudolph Valentino, and Clara Bow familiar figures to the Eskimo, the Malay, and the heathen Chinese; while at home the attendance at the motion-picture houses of "Middletown" during a single month (December, 1923) amounted to four and a half times the entire population of the city. Men, women, and children, rich and poor, the Middletowners went to the movies at an average rate of better than once a week!

Was this Coolidge Prosperity real? The farmers did not think so. Perhaps the textile manufacturers did not think so. But the figures of corporation profits and wages and incomes left little room for doubt. Consider, for example, two significant facts at opposite ends of the scale of wealth. Between 1922 and 1927, the purchasing power of American wages increased at the rate of more than two per cent annually. And during the three years between 1924 and 1927 alone there was a leap from 75 to 283 in the number of Americans who paid taxes on incomes of more than a million dollars a year.

4

Why did it happen? What made the United States so prosperous?

Some of the reasons were obvious enough. The war had impoverished Europe and hardly damaged the United States at all; when peace came the Americans found themselves the economic masters of the world. Their young country, with enormous resources in materials and in human energy and with a wide domestic market, was ready to take advantage of this situation. It had developed mass production to a new point of mechanical and managerial efficiency. The Ford gospel of high wages, low prices, and standardized manufacture on a basis of the most minute division of machine-tending labor was working smoothly not only at Highland Park, but in thousands of other factories. Executives, remembering with a shudder the piled-up inventories of 1921, had learned the lesson of cautious hand-to-mouth buying; and they were surrounded with more expert technical consultants, research men, personnel managers, statisticians, and business forecasters than had ever before invaded that cave of the winds, the conference room. Their confi-

dence was strengthened by their almost superstitious belief that the Republican Administration was their invincible ally. And they were all of them aided by the boom in the automobile industry. The phenomenal activity of this one part of the body economic—which was responsible, directly or indirectly, for the employment of nearly four million men—pumped new life into all the rest.

Prosperity was assisted, too, by two new stimulants to purchasing, each of which mortgaged the future but kept the factories roaring while it was being injected. The first was the increase in installment buying. People were getting to consider it old-fashioned to limit their purchases to the amount of their cash balance; the thing to do was to "exercise their credit." By the latter part of the decade, economists figured that 15 per cent of all retail sales were on an installment basis, and that there were some six billions of "easy payment" paper outstanding. The other stimulant was stock-market speculation. When stocks were skyrocketing in 1928 and 1929 it is probable that hundreds of thousands of people were buying goods with money which represented, essentially, a gamble on the business profits of the nineteen-thirties. It was fun while it lasted.

If these were the principal causes of Coolidge Prosperity, the salesman and the advertising man were at least its agents and evangelists. Business had learned as never before the immense importance to it of the ultimate consumer. Unless he could be persuaded to buy and buy lavishly, the whole stream of six-cylinder cars, super-heterodynes, cigarettes, rouge compacts, and electric ice-boxes would be dammed at its outlet. The salesman and the advertising man held the key to this outlet. As competition increased their methods became more strenuous. No longer was it considered enough to recommend one's goods in modest and explicit terms and to place them on the counter in the hope that the ultimate consumer would make up his mind to purchase. The advertiser must plan elaborate national campaigns, consult with psychologists, and employ all the eloquence of poets to cajole, exhort, or intimidate the consumer into buying,—to "break down consumer resistance." Not only was each individual concern struggling to get a larger share of the business in its own field, but whole industries shouted against one another in the public's ear. The embattled candy manufacturers took full-page space in the newspapers to reply to the American Tobacco Company's slogan of

"Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet." Trade journals were quoted by the *Reader's Digest* as reporting the efforts of the furniture manufacturers to make the people "furniture conscious" and of the clothing manufacturers to make them "tuxedo conscious." The salesman must have the ardor of a zealot, must force his way into people's houses by hook or by crook, must let nothing stand between him and the consummation of his sale. As executives put it, "You can't be an order-taker any longer—you've got to be a *salesman*." The public, generally speaking, could be relied upon to regard with complacency the most flagrant assaults upon its credulity by the advertiser and the most outrageous invasions of its privacy by the salesman; for the public was in a mood to forgive every sin committed in the holy name of business.

Never before had such pressure been exerted upon salesmen to get results. Many concerns took up the quota system, setting as the objective for each sales representative a figure 20 or 25 per cent beyond that of the previous year, and putting it up to him to reach this figure or lose his employer's favor and perhaps his job. All sorts of sales contests and other ingenious devices were used to stimulate the force. Among the schemes suggested by the Dartnell Company of Chicago, which had more than ten thousand American business organizations subscribing to its service, was that of buying various novelties and sending them to the salesman at weekly intervals: one week a miniature feather duster with a tag urging him to "dust his territory," another week an imitation cannon cracker with the injunction to "make a big noise," and so on. The American Slicing Machine Company offered a turkey at Christmas to every one of its salesmen who beat his quota for the year. "We asked each man," explained the sales manager afterward, "to appoint a child in his family as a mascot, realizing that every one of them would work his head off to make some youngster happy at Christmas. The way these youngsters took hold of the plan was amusing, and at times the intensity of their interest was almost pathetic." The sales manager of another concern reported cheerfully that "one of his stunts" was "to twit one man at the good work of another until he is almost sore enough to be ready to fight." And according to Jesse Rainsford Sprague, still another company invented—and boasted of—a method of goading its salesmen which for sheer inhumanity probably set a

record for the whole era of Coolidge Prosperity. It gave a banquet at which the man with the best score was served with oysters, roast turkey, and a most elaborate ice; the man with the second best score had the same dinner but without the oysters; and so on down to the man with the worst score, before whom was laid a small plate of boiled beans and couple of crackers.

If the salesman was sometimes under pressure such as this, it is not surprising that the consumer felt the pressure, too. Let two extreme instances (both cited by Jesse Rainsford Sprague) suffice to suggest the trend in business methods. A wholesale drug concern offered to the trade a small table with a railing round its top for the display of "specials"; it was to be set up directly in the path of customers, "whose attention," according to *Printer's Ink*, "will be attracted to the articles when they fall over it, bump into it, kick their shins upon it, or otherwise come in contact with it." And *Selling News* awarded one of its cash prizes for "sales ideas" to a vender of electric cleaners who told the following story of commercial prowess. One day he looked up from the street and saw a lady shaking a rug out of a second-story window. "The door leading to her upstairs rooms was open. I went right in and up those stairs without knocking, greeting the lady with the remark: 'Well, I am here right on time. What room do you wish me to start in?' She was very much surprised, assuring me that I had the wrong number. But during my very courteous apologies I had managed to get my cleaner connected and in action. The result was that I walked out minus the cleaner, plus her contract and check for a substantial down payment." The readers of *Selling News* were apparently not expected to be less than enthusiastic at the prospect of a man invading a woman's apartment and setting up a cleaner in it without permission and under false pretenses. For if you could get away with such exploits, it helped business, and good business helped prosperity, and prosperity was good for the country.

5

The advertisers met the competition of the new era with better design, persuasively realistic photographs, and sheer volume: the amount of advertising done in 1927, according to Francis H. Sisson, came to over a billion and a half dollars. They met it with a new

frankness, introducing to staid magazine readers the advantages of Odo-ro-no and Kotex. And they met it, furthermore, with a subtle change in technic. The copy-writer was learning to pay less attention to the special qualities and advantages of his product, and more to the study of what the mass of unregenerate mankind wanted—to be young and desirable, to be rich, to keep up with the Joneses, to be envied. The winning method was to associate his product with one or more of these ends, logically or illogically, truthfully or cynically; to draw a lesson from the dramatic case of some imaginary man or woman whose fate was altered by the use of X's soap, to show that in the most fashionable circles people were choosing the right cigarette in blindfold tests, or to suggest by means of glowing testimonials—often bought and paid for—that the advertised product was used by women of fashion, movie stars, and non-stop flyers. One queen of the films was said to have journeyed from California all the way to New York to spend a single exhausting day being photographed for testimonial purposes in dozens of costumes and using dozens of commercial articles, many of which she had presumably never laid eyes on before—and all because the appearance of these testimonials would help advertise her newest picture. Of what value were sober facts from the laboratory: did not a tooth-powder manufacturer try to meet the hokum of emotional toothpaste advertising by citing medical authorities, and was not his counter-campaign as a breath in a gale? At the beginning of the decade advertising had been considered a business; in the early days of Coolidge Prosperity its fulsome prophets were calling it a profession; but by the end of the decade many of its practitioners, observing the overwhelming victory of methods taken over from tabloid journalism, were beginning to refer to it—among themselves—as a racket.

A wise man of the nineteen-twenties might have said that he cared not who made the laws of the country if he only might write its national advertising. For here were the sagas of the age, romances and tragedies depicting characters who became more familiar to the populace than those in any novel. The man who distinctly remembered Mr. Addison Sims of Seattle. . . . The four out of five who, failing to use Forhan's, succumbed to pyorrhea, each of them with a white mask mercifully concealing his unhappy mouth. . . . The pathetic figure of the man, once a golf champion, "now only a wist-

ful onlooker" creeping about after the star players, his shattered health due to tooth neglect. . . . The poor fellow sunk in the corner of a taxicab, whose wife upbraided him with not having said a word all evening (when he might so easily have shone with the aid of the *Elbert Hubbard Scrap Book*). . . . The man whose conversation so dazzled the company that the envious dinner-coated bystanders could only breathe in amazement, "I think he's quoting from Shelley." . . . The woman who would undoubtedly do something about B. O. if people only said to her what they really thought. . . . The man whose friends laughed when the waiter spoke to him in French. . . . The girl who thought filet mignon was a kind of fish. . . . The poor couple who faced one another in humiliation after their guests were gone, the wife still holding the door knob and struggling against her tears, the husband biting his nails with shame (When Your Guests Are Gone—Are You Sorry You Ever Invited Them? . . . Be Free From All Embarrassment! Let the Famous *Book of Etiquette* Tell You Exactly What to Do, Say, Write, or Wear on Every Occasion). . . . The girl who merely carried the daisy chain, yet she had athlete's foot. . . . These men and women of the advertising pages, suffering or triumphant, became a part of the folklore of the day.

Sometimes their feats were astonishing. Consider, for example, the man who had purchased Nelson Doubleday's *Pocket University*, and found himself, one evening, in a group in which some one mentioned Ali Baba:

Ali Baba? I sat forward in my chair. I could tell them all about this romantic, picturesque figure of fiction.

I don't know how it happened, but they gathered all around me. And I told them of golden ships that sailed the seven seas, of a famous man and his donkey who wandered unknown ways, of the brute-man from whom we are all descended. I told them things they never knew of Cleopatra, of the eccentric Diogenes, of Romulus and the founding of Rome. I told them of the unfortunate death of Sir Raleigh (*sic*), of the tragic end of poor Anne Boleyn. . . .

"You must have traveled all over the world to know so many marvelous things."

Skeptics might smile, thanking themselves that they were not of the company on that interminable evening; but the advertisement stuck in their minds. And to others, less sophisticated, it doubtless

opened shining vistas of delight. They, too, could hold the dinner party spellbound if only they filled out the coupon. . . .

By far the most famous of these dramatic advertisements of the Post-war Decade was the long series in which the awful results of halitosis were set forth through the depiction of a gallery of unfortunates whose closest friends would not tell them. "Often a bridesmaid but never a bride. . . . Edna's case was really a pathetic one." . . . "Why did she leave him that way?" . . . "*That's* why you're a failure," . . . and then that devilishly ingenious display which capitalized the fears aroused by earlier tragedies in the series: the picture of a girl looking at a Listerine advertisement and saying to herself, "This *can't* apply to me!" Useless for the American Medical Association to insist that Listerine was "not a true deodorant," that it simply covered one smell with another. Just as useless as for the Life Extension Institute to find "one out of twenty with pyorrhea, rather than Mr. Forhan's famous four-out-of-five" (to quote Stuart Chase once more). Halitosis had the power of dramatic advertising behind it, and Listerine swept to greater and greater profits on a tide of public trepidation.

6

As year followed year of prosperity, the new diffusion of wealth brought marked results. There had been a great boom in higher education immediately after the war, and the boom continued, although at a somewhat slackened pace, until college trustees were beside themselves wondering how to find room for the swarming applicants. There was an epidemic of outlines of knowledge and books of etiquette for those who had got rich quick and wanted to get cultured quick and become socially at ease. Wells's *Outline of History*, the best-selling non-fiction book of 1921 and 1922, was followed by Van Loon's *Story of Mankind*, J. Arthur Thomson's *Outline of Science* (both of them best sellers in 1922), the Doubleday mail-order *Book of Etiquette* and Emily Post's *Book of Etiquette* (which led the non-fiction list in 1923), *Why We Behave Like Human Beings* (a big success of 1926), and *The Story of Philosophy*, which ran away from all other books in the non-fiction list of 1927.

There was a rush of innocents abroad. According to the figures of the Department of Commerce, over 437,000 people left the United

States by ship for foreign parts in the year 1928 alone, to say nothing of 14,000 odd who entered Canada and Mexico by rail, and over three million cars which crossed into Canada for a day or more. The innocents spent freely: the money that they left abroad, in fact (amounting in 1928 to some 650,000,000), solved for a time a difficult problem in international finance: how the United States could continue to receive interest on her foreign debts and foreign investments without permitting foreign goods to pass the high tariff barrier in large quantities.

The United States became the banker and financial arbitrator for the world. When the financial relations between Germany and the Allies needed to be straightened out, it was General Charles G. Dawes and Owen D. Young who headed the necessary international commissions—not only because their judgment was considered wise, and impartial as between the countries of Europe, but because the United States was in a position to call the tune. Americans were called in to reorganize the finances of one country after another. American investments abroad increased by leaps and bounds. The squat limestone building at the corner of Broad and Wall Streets, still wearing the scars of the shrapnel which had struck it during the 1920 explosion, had become the undisputed financial center of the world. Only occasionally did the United States have to intervene by force of arms in other countries. The Marines ruled Haiti and restored order in Nicaragua; but in general the country extended its empire not by military conquest or political dictation, but by financial penetration.

At home, one of the most conspicuous results of prosperity was the conquest of the whole country by urban tastes and urban dress and the urban way of living. The rube disappeared. Girls in the villages of New Hampshire and Wyoming wore the same brief skirts and used the same lip-sticks as their sisters in New York. The proletariat—or what the radicals of the Big Red Scare days had called the proletariat—gradually lost its class consciousness; the American Federation of Labor dwindled in membership and influence; the time had come when workingmen owned second-hand Buicks and applauded Jimmy Walker, not objecting in the least, it seemed, to his exquisite clothes, his valet, and his frequent visits to the millionaire-haunted sands of Palm Beach. It was no accident that men like

Mellon and Hoover and Morrow found their wealth an asset rather than a liability in public office, or that there was a widespread popular movement to make Henry Ford President in 1924. The possession of millions was a sign of success, and success was worshipped the country over.

7

Business itself was regarded with a new veneration. Once it had been considered less dignified and distinguished than the learned professions, but now people thought they praised a clergyman highly when they called him a good business man. College alumni, gathered at their annual banquets, fervently applauded banker trustees who spoke of education as one of the greatest American industries and compared the president and the dean to business executives. The colleges themselves organized business courses and cheerfully granted credit to candidates for degrees in the arts and sciences for their work in advertising copy-writing, marketing methods, elementary stenography, and drug-store practice. Even Columbia University drew men and women into its home-study courses by a system of follow-up letters worthy of a manufacturer of refrigerators, and sent out salesmen to ring the door bells of those who expressed a flicker of interest; even the great University of Chicago made use of what André Siegfried has called "the mysticism of success" by heading an advertisement of its correspondence courses with the admonition to "DEVELOP POWER AT HOME, to investigate, persevere, achieve." . . . The Harvard Business School established annual advertising awards, conferring academic *éclat* upon well-phrased sales arguments for commercial products. It was not easy for the churches to resist the tide of business enthusiasm. The Swedish Immanuel Congregational Church in New York, according to an item in the *American Mercury*, recognized the superiority of the business to the spiritual appeal by offering to all who contributed one hundred dollars to its building fund "an engraved certificate of investment in preferred capital stock in the Kingdom of God." And a church billboard in uptown New York struck the same persuasive note: "Come to Church. Christian Worship Increases Your Efficiency. Christian F. Reisner, Pastor."

In every American city and town, service clubs gathered the flower

of the middle-class citizenry together for weekly luncheons noisy with good fellowship. They were growing fast, these service clubs. Rotary, the most famous of them, had been founded in 1905; by 1930 it had 150,000 members and boasted—as a sign of its international influence—as many as 3,000 clubs in 44 countries. The number of Kiwanis Clubs rose from 205 in 1920 to 1,800 in 1929; the Lions Clubs, of which the first was not formed until 1917, multiplied until at the end of the decade there were 1,200 of them. Nor did these clubs content themselves with singing songs and conducting social-service campaigns; they expressed the national faith in what one of their founders called “the redemptive and regenerative influence of business.” The speakers before them pictured the business man as a builder, a doer of great things, yes, and a dreamer whose imagination was ever seeking out new ways of serving humanity. It was a popular note, for in hundreds of directors’ rooms, around hundreds of conference tables, the American business men of the era of Coolidge Prosperity were seeing themselves as men of vision with eyes steadfastly fixed on the long future. At the end of the decade, a cartoon in the *New Yorker* represented an executive as saying to his heavy-jowled colleagues at one of these meetings: “We have ideas. Possibly we tilt at windmills—just seven Don Juans tilting at windmills.” It was a perfect bit of satire on business sentimentality. The service clubs specialized in this sort of mysticism: was not a speaker before the Rotarians of Waterloo, Iowa, quoted by the *American Mercury* as declaring that “Rotary is a manifestation of the divine”?

Indeed, the association of business with religion was one of the most significant phenomena of the day. When the National Association of Credit Men held their annual convention at New York, there were provided for the three thousand delegates a special devotional service at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and five sessions of prayer conducted by Protestant clergymen, a Roman Catholic priest, and a Jewish rabbi; and the credit men were uplifted by a sermon by Dr. S. Parkes Cadman on “Religion in Business.” Likewise the Associated Advertising Clubs, meeting in Philadelphia, listened to a keynote address by Doctor Cadman on “Imagination and Advertising,” and at the meeting of the Church Advertising Department the subjects discussed included “Spiritual Principles in Advertising” and “Advertising the Kingdom through Press-Radio Service.” The

fact that each night of the session a cabaret entertainment was furnished to the earnest delegates from 11.30 to 2 and that part of the Atlantic City Beauty Pageant was presented was merely a sign that even men of high faith must have their fun.

So frequent was the use of the Bible to point the lessons of business and of business to point the lessons of the Bible that it was sometimes difficult to determine which was supposed to gain the most from the association. Fred F. French, a New York builder and real-estate man, told his salesmen, "There is no such thing as a reason why not," and continued: "One evidence of the soundness of this theory may be found in the command laid down in Matthew vii:7 by the Greatest Human-nature Expert that ever lived, 'Knock and it shall be opened unto you.'" He continued by quoting "the greatest command of them all—'Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself'"—and then stated that by following such high principles the Fred F. French salesmen had "immeasurably strengthened their own characters and power, so that during this year they will serve our stockholders at a lower commission rate, and yet each one earn more money for himself than in nineteen hundred twenty-five." In this case Scripture was apparently taken as setting a standard for business to meet—to its own pecuniary profit. Yet in other cases it was not so certain that business was not the standard, the Scripture complimented by being lifted to the business level.

Witness, for example, the pamphlet on *Moses, Persuader of Men* issued by the Metropolitan Casualty Insurance Company (with an introduction by the indefatigable Doctor Cadman), which declared that "Moses was one of the greatest salesmen and real-estate promoters that ever lived," that he was a "Dominant, Fearless, and Successful Personality in one of the most magnificent selling campaigns that history ever placed upon its pages." And witness, finally, the extraordinary message preached by Bruce Barton in *The Man Nobody Knows*, which so touched the American heart that for two successive years—1925 and 1926—it was the best-selling non-fiction book in the United States. Barton sold Christianity to the public by showing its resemblance to business. Jesus, this book taught, was not only "the most popular dinner guest in Jerusalem" and "an outdoor man," but a great executive. "He picked up twelve men from the bottom ranks of business and forged them into an organization that

conquered the world. . . . Nowhere is there such a startling example of executive success as the way in which that organization was brought together." His parables were "the most powerful advertisements of all time. . . . He would be a national advertiser today." In fact, Jesus was "the founder of modern business." Why, you ask? Because he was the author of the ideal of service.

The Gospel According to Bruce Barton met a popular demand. Under the beneficent influence of Coolidge Prosperity, business had become almost the national religion of America. Millions of people wanted to be reassured that this religion was altogether right and proper, and that in the rules for making big money lay all the law and the prophets.

Was it strange that during the very years when the Barton Gospel was circulating most vigorously, selling and advertising campaigns were becoming more cynical and the American business world was refusing to exercise itself over the Teapot Dome disclosures and the sordid history of the Continental Trading Company? Perhaps; but it must be remembered that in all religions there is likely to be a gap between faith and works. The business man's halo did not always fit, but he wore it proudly.

8

So the prosperity band-wagon rolled along with throttle wide open and siren blaring. But what of the man on the driver's seat, the man whose name this era bore?

He did not have a jutting chin, a Powerful Personality, or an irresistible flow of selling talk. If you had come from Timbuctoo and found him among a crowd of Chamber of Commerce boosters, he would have been the last man you would have picked as their patron saint. He had never been in business. His canonization by the hosts of quantity production and high-pressure salesmanship was a sublime paradox—and yet it was largely justified. Almost the most remarkable thing about Coolidge Prosperity was Calvin Coolidge.

He was a meager-looking man, a Vermonter with a hatchet face, sandy hair, tight lips, and the expression, as William Allen White remarked, of one "looking down his nose to locate that evil smell which seemed forever to affront him." He was pale and diffident. In private he could be garrulous, but in public he was as silent as a cake

of ice. When his firmness in the Boston police strike captured the attention of the country and brought him to Washington as Vice-President, not even the affable warmth of the Harding Administration could thaw him. The Vice-President has to go to many a formal dinner; Coolidge went—and said nothing. The hostesses of Washington were dismayed and puzzled. “Over the Alps lay Italy, they thought, but none of them had won the summit and so they couldn’t be sure that the view was worth the climb,” wrote Edward G. Lowry. Coolidge became President, and still the frost continued.

Nor did this silence cloak a wide-ranging mind. Coolidge knew his American history, but neither he nor his intellect had ever ventured far abroad. Go through his addresses and his smug *Autobiography*, and the most original thing you will find in them is his uncompromising unoriginality. Calvin Coolidge still believed in the old American copy-book maxims when almost everybody else had half forgotten them or was beginning to doubt them. “The success which is made in any walk of life is measured almost exactly by the amount of hard work that is put into it. . . . There is only one form of political strategy in which I have any confidence, and that is to try to do the right thing and sometimes be able to succeed. . . . If society lacks learning and virtue it will perish. . . . The nation with the greatest moral power will win. . . .” This philosophy of hard work and frugal living and piety crowned with success might have been brought down from some Vermont attic where *McGuffey’s Reader* gathered dust. But it was so old that it looked new; it was so exactly what uncounted Americans had been taught at their mother’s knee that it touched what remained of the pioneer spirit in their hearts; and Coolidge set it forth with refreshing brevity. So completely did it win over the country that if the President had declared that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, one wonders if editorial pages would not have paid tribute to his concise wisdom.

He was not a bold leader, nor did he care to be. He followed no gleam, stormed no redoubt. Considering the fact that he was in the White House for five years and seven months, his presidential record was surprisingly negative. But it was just the sort of record that he preferred.

In its foreign policy, his Administration made little effort to per-

suade the American people that they were not happily isolated from the outside world. Bankers might engage in determining the amount of German reparations, unofficial observers might sit in on European negotiations, but the Government, remembering the decline and fall of Woodrow Wilson, shrewdly maintained an air of magnificent unconcern. Coolidge proposed, as had Harding before him, that the United States should join the World Court, but so gently that when the Senate eventually ratified the proposal with reservations which the other member nations were unable to accept, and the President went out of office without having achieved his end, nobody felt that his prestige suffered much thereby. A second naval conference was held at Geneva in 1927, but ended in failure. A Nicaraguan revolution was settled—after considerable turmoil and humiliation—with the aid of the Marines and of Henry L. Stimson's plan for a new election under American supervision. An even more bitter dispute with Mexico over the legal status of oil lands owned by American interests was finally moderated through the wisdom and tact of Coolidge's Amherst classmate and ambassador, Dwight W. Morrow. But the most conspicuous achievement of the Coolidge Administration in foreign affairs was the leading part it took in securing the Kellogg-Briand Treaty renouncing war as an instrument of national policy—a fine gesture which every nation was delighted to make but which had very little noticeable influence on the actualities of international relations. Aside from the belated solution of the Nicaraguan and Mexican difficulties and the championship of this somewhat innocuous treaty, the policy of the Coolidge Administration was to collect the money due it (even at the expense of considerable ill-feeling), to keep a watchful eye on the expansion of the American financial empire, and otherwise to let well enough alone.

Coolidge's record in domestic affairs was even less exciting. He was nothing if not cautious. When the Harding scandals came to light, he did what was necessary to set in motion an official prosecution, he adroitly jockeyed the notorious Daugherty out of the Cabinet, and from that moment on he exhibited an unruffled and altogether convincing calm. When there was a strike in the anthracite coal mines he did not leap into the breach; he let Governor Gifford Pinchot of Pennsylvania do it. On the one burning political issue of the day, that of prohibition, he managed to express no

opinion except that the laws should be enforced. There was dynamite in prohibition; Calvin Coolidge remained at a safe distance and looked the other way.

He maintained the *status quo* for the benefit of business. Twice he vetoed farm relief legislation—to the immense satisfaction of the industrial and banking community which constituted his strongest support—on the ground that the McNary-Haugen bills were economically unsound. He vetoed the soldier bonus, too, on the ground of its expense, though in this case his veto was overruled. His proudest boast was that he cut down the cost of running the Government by systematic cheeseparings, reduced the public debt, and brought about four reductions in federal taxes, aiding not only those with small incomes but even more conspicuously those with large. Meanwhile his Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover, ingeniously helped business to help itself; on the various governmental commissions, critics of contemporary commercial practices were replaced, as far as possible, by those who would look upon business with a lenient eye; and the serene quiet which lay about the White House was broken only by occasional flattering pronouncements upon business and assurances that prosperity was securely founded.

An uninspired and unheroic policy, you suggest? But it was sincere: Calvin Coolidge honestly believed that by asserting himself as little as possible and by lifting the tax burdens of the rich he was benefiting the whole country—as perhaps he was. And it was perfectly in keeping with the uninspired and unheroic political temper of the times. For the lusty business men who in these fat years had become the arbiters of national opinion did not envisage the Government as an agency for making over the country into something a little nearer to their hearts' desire, as a champion of human rights or a redresser of wrongs. The prosperity bank-wagon was bringing them rapidly toward their hearts' desire, and politics might block the traffic. They did not want a man of action in the Presidency; they wanted as little government as possible, at as low cost as possible, and this dour New Englander who drove the prosperity band-wagon with so slack a rein embodied their idea of supreme statesmanship.

Statesmanship of a sort Calvin Coolidge certainly represented. Prosperity has its undeniable advantages, and a President who is

astute enough to know how to encourage it without getting himself into hot water may possibly be forgiven such complacency as appears in his *Autobiography*. There is perhaps a cool word to be said, too, for the prudence which deliberately accepts the inevitable, which does not even try to be bolder or more magnanimous than circumstances will safely permit. The great god business was supreme in the land, and Calvin Coolidge was fortunate enough to become almost a demi-god by doing discreet obeisance before the altar.

ROBERT S. AND HELEN MERRELL LYND

ONLY IN RECENT YEARS have historians come to appreciate the contribution which other social sciences can make to an understanding of history. The reasons that an alliance was not made earlier are not difficult to see. Perhaps, fundamentally, there was need to wait until history ceased to be as preoccupied as it had been with past politics. But it must be remembered also that subjects such as sociology and anthropology did not assume their full dimensions and emerge as useful, independent disciplines until after the turn of the twentieth century.

The help which the historian receives from the kindred social sciences is of two kinds. Indirectly, he is assisted by the different concepts and the new methods which they have developed for handling materials. These may, with varying degrees of modification, be applied by historians to their own subject matter. But in the field of recent history, other social scientists can lend to the historian not only their technology but studies of immediate historical interest. Indeed, as the past merges with the present, the historian seems to lose his separate identity and becomes a combination of sociologist, political analyst, and economist.

Among the accounts of the 1920's now available to the history student, few are more valuable than Robert and Helen Lynd's *Middletown*, published in 1929. Based upon a field investigation conducted by the authors themselves, it is both a source book of

primary materials and a secondary analysis of the facts collected. To those who think of the 1920's in terms of raccoon coats, stock-market booms, and Al Capones, *Middletown* comes as a surprise—even as a disappointment. The Lynds had no desire to be the lively chroniclers of a bizarre era. Instead, they attempted a clinical study of a typical American community, employing the scientific tools of the trained sociologist. If they were interested in what was new about the postwar period, they were equally concerned with the traditional patterns of action and thought.

It will be apparent at once that this book differs from Frederick Lewis Allen's *Only Yesterday* not only in method and purpose but also in the picture it gives of life in America during the years of "Coolidge Prosperity." The leisure of Middletown's citizens was conditioned by the same automobiles, radios, and motion pictures that loom so prominently in Allen's pages; their jobs were dependent on the same industrial developments that Allen describes. But the people of Middletown shared only a small amount of the prosperity and participated little in the desperate pursuit of pleasure which characterize Allen's 1920's. Theirs was not the insecurity which accompanied speculation in submerged Florida real estate, but that which comes from the chilling fear of unemployment. They could hardly have attended many all-night drinking parties, since most of them were on the way to work by seven o'clock in the morning.

Although *Middletown* and *Only Yesterday* have many points of dissimilarity, they are not necessarily contradictory. Allen's focus is essentially different from the Lynds' and wide enough to include subject matter which the Lynds do not consider. While Allen uses a broad panorama, leaping from New York to Florida and from the Waldorf-Astoria to Senate hearing committees, the Lynds, using the technique of the sociologist, concentrate their study on a small area, which they attempt to explore intensively.

The obvious merits of *Middletown*, combined with the lack of an equally comprehensive parallel study, make it difficult for

anyone to speak confidently of its deficiencies. As a historical study, its only apparent limitations derive from the modesty of the conclusions reached by the authors. One would wish to know what general meaning the Lynds ascribe to this analysis of one town. What portion of America is represented by Middletown and its citizens? How valid is the study for students of southern or New England history? That the answers to such questions lay outside the scope of the authors' intentions will continue to be a matter of regret to students of history.

Yet historians have more cause to rejoice over such a book than to carp at its failure to be designed perfectly for their purposes. Not only does it offer considerable assistance in itself; it suggests the enormous future contribution which the other social sciences can make toward a more mature and enlightened understanding of history.

The Long Arm of the Job

As ONE prowls Middletown streets about six o'clock of a winter morning one notes two kinds of homes: the dark ones where people still sleep, and the ones with a light in the kitchen where the adults of the household may be seen moving about, starting the business of the day. For the seven out of every ten of those gainfully employed who constitute the working class, getting a living means being at work in the morning anywhere between six-fifteen and seven-thirty o'clock, chiefly seven. For the other three in each ten, the business class, being at work in the morning means seven-forty-five, eight or eight-thirty, or even nine o'clock, but chiefly eight-thirty. Of the sample of 112 working class housewives reporting

From *Middletown* by Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, copyright, 1929, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

on this point, forty-eight (two out of five) rise at or before five o'clock, seventy-nine (nearly three-fourths) by five-thirty, and 104 (over nine-tenths) are up at or before six. Among the group of forty business class housewives interviewed, none rises before six, only six at six, fourteen at any time before seven, and twenty-six rise at seven or later.

This gap between the rising hours of the two sections of the population touches the interlocked complex of Middletown life at many points. A prominent citizen speaking on the curtailing of family life by clubs, committees, and other organized activities urged the parents of the city to "Help solve the boy problem by making breakfast a time of leisurely family reunion." He did not realize that such a solution could apply to only about one-third of the city's families, since in the other two-thirds the father gets up in the dark in winter, eats hastily in the kitchen in the gray dawn, and is at work from an hour to two and a quarter hours before his children have to be at school. Or take another local "problem"—the deadlock between north and south sides of the city in the spring of 1925 over daylight saving time; the working class majority overwhelmed the measure before the city officials on the plea that in summer their small dwellings cool off slowly, often remaining warm until after midnight, and that they can ill spare an hour of cool early-morning sleep before they must get up to work. The business men, on the other hand, urged the need of daylight time because of golf and because standard time put local business at a two-hour disadvantage in dealing with Eastern business. Each group thought the other unreasonable.

The rising hours of business and working class differed less thirty-five years ago, as early rising was then somewhat more characteristic of the entire city. Nowadays one does not find doctors keeping seven to nine o'clock morning office hours as in 1890. During the eighties retail stores opened at seven or seven-thirty and closed at eight or nine, a thirteen-hour day.¹ About 1890 a six o'clock closing hour,

¹ In the leading men's clothing store in 1890 the hours were 7 A.M. to 10 P.M. on Monday, 7 A.M. to 9 P.M. Tuesday to Friday, and on Saturday 7 A.M. to midnight. Stores were frequently open parts of such holidays as Thanksgiving and Christmas.

In 1890 the Middletown jewelry clerks "organized a union . . . and waited upon their employers and made known their desire of being off duty at 7.30 each

except on Saturdays, was tried by a few merchants, and gradually the practice prevailed. Today stores open at eight or eight-thirty and close at five-thirty.

Ten hours a day, six days a week, was the standard rhythm of work for Middletown industrial workers in 1890.² In 1914, 73 per cent. of them, according to the Federal Census, worked sixty hours a week or longer. By 1919 only 33 per cent. worked sixty hours or longer, although another 35 per cent. worked from fifty-five to sixty hours a week. The coming of the now almost universal Saturday half-holiday is the outstanding shift in industrial hours of work since 1890.

Year in and year out, about 300 working men work all night and sleep during the day. Periodically, however, a force of 3,000-4,000 men is either shifted from day work or recruited afresh by leading plants to work at night, thus establishing continuous day and night use of machinery.³ These periods of night work continue usually five to six months, after which the workers are discharged or shifted to day work. The repercussion upon home, leisure time, community life, and other activities of these periodic dislocations of the rhythms of living, when anywhere from several hundred to three or four thousand heads of families "go on night shift," should be borne in mind; the normal relations between husband and wife, children's customary noisy play around home, family leisure-time activities, lodge life, jury duty, civic interest, and other concerns are deranged as by the tipping over of one in a long line of dominoes. "I work nights, judge, and sleep during the day, and I haven't been able to keep in touch with George," pled a father to the judge of the juvenile court in behalf of his son. The fact that, with few excep-

evening and allowed to attend all ball games." "We are glad to say," adds the press account, "that, rather than have trouble, the jewelry men have acceded to their demands."

² All four of the representative Middletown iron works and the four leading wood-working plants listed in the 1891 state *Biennial Report* had a ten-hour day. Among the glass workers, where there was a high degree of organization, two plants had a nine-hour day and two a ten-hour day.

³ Only three times, for five or six months each, in the five years between January 1, 1920, and January 1, 1925, have "times" been sufficiently "good" in Middletown for this to happen generally throughout the major industries of the city. At other times night shifts are put on for short periods to meet the needs of individual plants.

tions, this dislocating factor affects only the working class has direct bearing upon the differential concern of the two groups for such things as the civic welfare of "Magic Middletown."

Not only does the accident of membership in one or the other of the two main groups in the city determine the number of hours worked and the liability to night work, but it also determines to a considerable degree whether one is allowed to get a living uninterruptedly year after year or is subject to periodic partial or total debarments from these necessary activities.⁴ The most prosperous two-thirds of the business group, at a rough estimate, now as in 1890, are virtually never subject to interruptions of this kind so long as they do good work, while the other third is somewhat subject to cessation of work, though to a less extent than the working class. When "times were very bad" in 1924 the leading department store laid off small groups of clerks alternate weeks without pay. During 1923 the office force of a leading machine shop plant dropped at one time during the year to 79 per cent. of its peak number, while the wage-earners declined to 32 per cent. of the peak.⁵

Among the working class, however, the business device of the

⁴ The institution of an annual vacation of one or two weeks with pay is another point at which the rhythms of work of working man and business man differ. Among the latter, vacations are today a well-nigh universal rule, but no working man gets vacations with pay, save an occasional foreman who may get a single week. Cf. discussion of the growth of the vacation habit since 1890 in Ch. XVIII [in *Middletown*].

⁵ The relative seriousness of "bad times" to business and working class personnel is revealed in Willford I. King's *Employment Hours and Earnings in Prosperity and Depression* (New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1923), p. 53 ff., in the estimate for the continental United States of the percentage of maximum cyclical decline over the period of industrial strain from the beginning of 1920 through the first quarter of 1922 in the total hours actually worked, as follows:

	Enterprises having less than 21 employees	Enterprises having 21-100 employees	Enterprises having over 100 employees	Total enter- prises of all sizes
Commerce and trade	1.27%	5.81%	9.94%	2.78%
Retail only	1.31	4.66	10.84	2.75
All factories	8.21	19.21	38.56	29.97
Metal and metal products only	17.89	52.10	52.65	50.25

In this connection the predominance of metal industries in Middletown should be borne in mind.

"shut-down" or "lay-off" is a recurrent phenomenon. If the number of working men employed in seven leading Middletown plants⁶ on June 30, 1920, be taken as 100, the number allowed to get a living on December 31, 1921, was sixty-eight; on December 31, 1922, ninety-three; on June 30, 1923, 121; on December 31, 1923, 114; on June 30, 1924, seventy-seven; on December 31, 1924, sixty-one; on June 30, 1925, eighty-one.⁷ The month-by-month record of one of these plants, a leading machine shop, during 1923, again taking the number employed on June 30, 1920, as 100, was:

January	61	May	117	September	57
February	75	June	92	October	48
March	93	July	66	November	43
April	110	August	63	December	46

In one leading plant 1,000 is regarded as the "normal force." When interviewed in the summer of 1924, about 250 men were actually getting a living at this plant, though the bosses "think of about 550 [of the normal 1,000] as our men." The other 450 are floaters picked up when needed. In another large plant the number of men employed on December 31, 1923, was 802, and six months later, June 30, 1924, was 316, but only 205 of these men worked continuously throughout the entire six months with no lay-offs.

Of the sample of 165 working class families from whom data on steadiness of work was secured, 72 per cent. of the male heads of families lost no time at work in the twelve months of 1923 when "times were good," another 15 per cent. lost less than a month, and 13 per cent. lost a month or more; during the first nine months of 1924, throughout the last six of which "times were bad," only 38 per cent. of the 165 lost no time, another 19 per cent. lost less than a month, and 43 per cent. lost a month or more. Among the forty families of business men interviewed, only one of the men had been unemployed at any time during the two years, 1923-24—and that was not due to a lay-off.

It is difficult to say whether employment tends to be more or less regular in Middletown today than a generation ago. Sharper com-

⁶ These seven plants were used by a local bank as an index of local employment in its monthly summaries of local business.

⁷ These intervals are uneven because the data were available only for the dates given.

petition throughout markets that have become nation-wide, the rise of the new technique of cost-accounting, the resulting substantial overhead charges on expensive plant and machinery, and the imperturbability of machines in the doggiest of "dog-days" discourage today the easy custom of closing down the plant altogether which flourished among the flimsy factories and hand-workers of a generation ago. A characteristic summer news item in the *Middletown Times* for June 12, 1890, says: "Ninety per cent. of the glass houses in the U. S. A. close on Saturday until the first of September." Short shut-downs of two weeks or so at other times in the year were not uncommon. And yet, despite modern compulsions to maintain at least minimum production, and in fact because of such impersonal techniques as cost-accounting, lay-offs have become much more automatic than the reluctant personal decision of a sympathetic employer.⁸ The sheer increase in the size of present-day plants⁹ operates to make these periodic increases and curtailments in working force more obligatory when the need for them arises.¹⁰

As in the case of the lowering of the old-age deadline, described in Chapter V, the phenomenon of recurrent industrial unemployment assumes totally different aspects as it is viewed through the eyes of a business man or of a working man. For the dominant manufacturing group, the peremptory little figures on the cost sheets require that there shall always be on hand enough workers to take care of any fluctuations in business. The condition of there being

⁸ "On the transition to the machine technology . . . the individual workman has been falling into the position of an auxiliary factor, nearly into that of an article of supply, to be charged up as an item of operating expenses." Veblen, *The Nature of Peace* (New York; Huebsch, 1919), pp. 320-321.

Cf. J. L. and Barbara Hammond, *The Town Labourer, 1760-1832* (London; Longmans, 1920), especially Chs. I, II, and VI.

⁹ The *Middletown* press in 1890 hailed as "a gigantic concern" a new industry which was to have "when in full operation" 200 hands. The largest working group in the city in January, 1891, was 225. In 1923, eleven plants each employed more than 300—three of the eleven employed more than 1,000, while one of these three regards its "normal force" as over the 2,000 mark.

¹⁰ See footnote 5 above regarding the relative impact of "hard times" on enterprises of different sizes. According to King's evidence, whether owing to the fact that "the small employer keeps less accurate accounts," to the fact that "the small employer, being well acquainted with his employees, is so much interested in the welfare of the latter that his relationships with them are not governed primarily by purely business considerations," or to other factors, the bump tends to hit the big enterprises several times as hard as the little fellows.

more men than available jobs, though dreaded by the working man, is commonly called by his bosses "an easier labor market."¹¹ In March, 1924, when the long slump of unemployment was commencing and employment in other cities ran "want ads." in the Middletown papers offering work, two special delivery letters were laid by the plate of the president of the Middletown Advertising Club at one of its weekly luncheons, asking the Club to use its influence to suppress such advertisement because they tended to draw unemployed machinists from town. The president of the club agreed that this was "something the Ad. Club certainly ought to back," and the representatives of all papers agreed to suppress the advertisements. The sentiment of the club was that it was important that plenty of skilled labor be kept in town.¹²

"People come to the house a great deal and tell me they can't get work," remarked the wife of a prominent business man. "Of course, I don't really believe that. I believe that any one who really tries can get work of some kind." This remark appears to sum up the philosophy of unemployment of many of the business class in

¹¹ This business men's psychology is well illustrated by the following statement by one of the city's influential manufacturers: "In 1922 we were so rushed with orders we couldn't possibly fill them or get enough men here in town to carry on, so we had to import some men from Kentucky and West Virginia. Our men from our local district here, born and bred on the farms near here, knowing the use of machinery of some sort from their boyhood, reliable, steady, we call 'corn-feds.' These men we brought in from the mountains we called 'green peas.' We brought two train loads of them down. Some of them learned quickly, and some of them didn't. Most of them have drifted back by now. We figured it cost \$75-\$200 to train each one of them, and there was such a demand for labor about town that they didn't stay with us. They drifted about from shop to shop, and of course when the slump came we fired them and kept our old men."

¹² To the bosses there is no "problem" in the abrupt posting, rarely more than a day in advance, of the announcement of a lay-off, or in the absence of any machinery for talking over with the men the reasons for the lay-off or its probable duration, or in the practice of "hiring at the gate."

During the depression of the summer of 1924 much press publicity was given to the announcement that a local plant would take on a thousand men the following Monday. The men crowded about the plant gates on the appointed day and a total of forty-eight were hired.

Cf. pp. 37-38 of Shelby M. Harrison's *Public Employment Offices* (New York; Russell Sage Foundation, 1924) for reasons why employers favor hiring at the gate. Cf. also Whiting Williams' *What's on the Worker's Mind* (New York; Scribner's, 1921), pp. 6-7, for the worker's view of this system.

Middletown. Others believe, as one outstanding business man put it, that "About the only thing that might be improved in the condition of working men today is unsteady employment. But that cannot possibly be helped. An employer cannot give employment to workmen if he cannot sell his goods."

To the workingmen, however, unemployment as a "problem" varies from a cloud the size of a man's hand when "times are good" to a black pall in a time of "easy labor market" that may overspread all the rest of their lives. It happened that times were not good during the late summer and fall of 1924 when the staff interviewed Middletown families. Over and over again, the wives interviewed answered the question, "What seems to be the future in your husband's job?" in terms of:

"He's to be laid off Saturday."

"He's just lucky if this job keeps up. He never knows from day to day whether his job will be there."

"He can't tell when he'll be laid off. One day he comes home thinking the work is over and then the next day he believes it will last a few weeks longer."

For many of them the dread had become an actuality:

"I know people that have been out of work since June," one woman said in October, "and they're almost crazy because of it. Maybe if more people understood what it means something could be done about it."

"Not even the foreman knew the lay-off was coming," said one quiet, intelligent-looking woman who with her husband had been laid off in a leading plant the night before, at the close of the first week in December. "Last week the whole plant worked overtime every night on straight time pay. A petition asking for more wages was circulated by the men, but my husband and two others wouldn't sign it because they thought it was no time to ask for a raise with so many out of work. Now we're told the lay-off came because of the petition, because orders have stopped coming in. We can't figure that out. . . . What'll we do? I don't know, but we must not take the boy out of school if we can any way get along."

"He's awfully blue because his job is gone," said another wife in November. "He's trying to get work at —. He hopes his old job will open up again in the spring."

Several of these women, all of them having husbands over thirty-five, said that their husbands had taken or would want work that paid less and had less future if it seemed likely to be "steady" and less subject to lay-offs. Steady work appeared to be generally valued by these older workers above high wages.¹³

The commonest working class solution of the problem of unemployment is to "get another job." Of the 182 sample workers for whom data was secured on this point, including 124 with children of school age, over a quarter (27 per cent.) had been with their present employers less than a year, over a third (38 per cent.) less than two years, and over half (55 per cent.) less than five years.¹⁴ This "getting another job" frequently involves leaving the city: "In the summer we took to the Ford and went looking for work." "He has a job now over in — [twenty-five miles away] and likes it so much he may stay on there."¹⁵

Failing in finding another chance to get a living, the whole fam-

¹³ Cf. Whiting Williams' statement: "If there is one thing I have learned on my labor travels it is that 'the job's the thing.' Wages are interesting, but the job is the axis on which the whole world turns for the workingman."

¹⁴ These figures do not mean that these men had had no unemployment during these periods or had not in many cases worked temporarily in other plants until their regular jobs "opened up again."

Between January 1, 1919, and October 1, 1924, of 178 men for whom these data are tabulable, 46 per cent. had had one job, 20 per cent. two jobs, 22 per cent. three jobs, and the remaining 12 per cent. more than three. Here again brief fill-in jobs were not counted, provided a man returned to his old job when "work opened up."

It should be remembered that the interviewers had to rely upon the wife for these data in nearly every case, though every effort was made to see that she did not omit any pertinent data.

¹⁵ This migratory tendency which modern industry invites and the Ford car enormously facilitates may be expected to have far-reaching influence throughout the rest of the workers' lives: e.g., the more frequent moving of working class families noted in Ch. IX [in *Middletown*] and the decline in neighborliness and intimate friends among the wives noted in Ch. XIX [in *Middletown*]. Cf. the statement by Roscoe Pound in *Criminal Justice in Cleveland*: "Some studies made during the war indicate that the moral implications of an increasingly migratory laboring population call for serious consideration. Our institutions presuppose a stable, home-owning, tax-paying population, of which each individual has and feels a personal interest in its legal and political institutions and bears his share in the conduct of them. Irregularity and discontinuity of employment and consequent migration from city to city, or back and forth between city and country, preclude the sort of society for which our institutions were shaped." (Cleveland; Cleveland Foundation, 1921; Part VIII), pp. 610-611.

ily settles down to the siege.¹⁶ Of 122 housewives, who gave information regarding readjustments occasioned by unemployment,¹⁷ eighty-three reported unemployment during the preceding fifty-seven months. Sixty-eight, the great majority of those reporting unemployment, had made changes in their routine habits to meet the emergency.¹⁸ Of these,

47 cut on clothing;

43 cut on food;

27 of the wives worked for pay either at home or away from home;

14 of the sixty carrying some form of insurance got behind on payments;

6 moved to a cheaper home;

5 of the 20 having a telephone had it taken out;

4 of the 35 with children in high school took a child from school.¹⁹

Such comments as the following by some of these housewives reflect the derangement of established habits in "bad times":

As touching savings. "We had been saving to buy a home but lost all our savings paying rent while he was laid off." "We had to use up all our savings to keep going." "We lost both our auto and our house. We had paid \$334.00 on the auto and had just a little over a hundred to pay. We had been paying on the house a little over a year." "My husband has just gone everywhere for work. We would have been out of debt now if he hadn't been out. It seems like a person just can't

¹⁶ At least two factors make the incidence of unemployment more difficult for the worker today than formerly: (1) The decline of trade unions and of neighborhood spirit (cf. Ch. VIII [*Middletown*]). (2) The extension of the precarious habit of leaning the present upon the future by long-term commitments to pay for the purchase of a home (cf. Ch. IX [*Middletown*]), insurance, household appliances, education of the children, and so on. To take but the case of life insurance: in the sixteen years between 1910 and 1926 the number of individual policies in force with one national company in Middletown and a portion of the surrounding county increased from 3,800 to 23,000; this number should be reduced by approximately 40 per cent. to get the number of policy holders.

¹⁷ These data are based upon the memory of the housewife; she had no opportunity to check up her recollection by talking to her husband. Undoubtedly certain minor lay-offs and times when work was reduced for short periods to three or four days a week were overlooked. These figures are therefore probably conservative throughout.

¹⁸ This does not include cessation of saving and inroads upon accumulated savings. If this factor be included, it is probably safe to say that unemployment affected the behavior of the entire group.

¹⁹ These changes did not usually come singly, and the families involved in the above categories therefore overlap.

save. We started to buy a house a couple of years ago and his company would have paid the first payment, but the very next day he got his arm broke. I never plan nothing any more." "We haven't lost our life insurance yet. Last year we had to let a thousand-dollar policy go when he was out."

As touching shelter. "We don't know where the rent for this month is coming from. We're out of coal, too." "We have cut down all we can on food and the phone is the next thing to go. I am not strong enough to wash as I used to when he was laid off. He hates to see the phone go. It's the only way we hear from our children."

As touching food. "Now they have a new man in the grocery and we're afraid he won't allow us to charge things so long. We had a \$60.00 grocery bill when he went back to work in 1922." "We get on the cheapest we can. Our living expenses are never more than \$5.00 a week" [family of five]. "We have been buying no fresh milk this year, using only canned milk" [a family including two boys age seven and nine]. "We just live as close as we can all the time. I tell the children if they get a little candy for Christmas this year they'll be lucky; they haven't had anything but clothes and things they absolutely need for the last two or three years." "We have cut our food all we can and have beans and potatoes two times a day with about \$2.00 worth of meat scattered through the week. I don't know what we'll do if there isn't work soon." "Last winter our grocery bill ran eight or nine dollars a week. Now it is five or six dollars, partly because we trade at a cheaper place and partly because we're economizing."

As touching leisure time. "I haven't been able to afford a movie show since January" [ten months].

The forced choices during times of unemployment reveal sharply the things some of these working class people live by:

A woman who had just returned to the store a new winter coat because her husband had lost his job said she planned to cut down on "picture shows"—"but I'll never cut on gas! I'd go without a meal before I'd cut down on using the car."

Another woman said: "I'll give up my home last. A friend of mine belongs to several clubs and won't resign from any of them even though her husband has been laid off three months. She says she'll give up her home before her clubs."

One woman spoke for many others when she said: "We'll give up everything except our insurance. We just can't let that go." The head of a local insurance company reported that unemployment has relatively little effect upon insurance policies. Of the 100 working class

families for whom income distribution on certain items was secured, all but seven reported money spent for life insurance in annual amounts ranging from \$2.25 to \$350.00.

To Middletown as a whole in its corporate group capacity, unemployment as a "problem" virtually does not exist. At most it becomes a matter for privately supported charity to cope with. In the extreme bad times of the winter of 1921-22 when local unemployment overwhelmed these charitable agencies, a supplementary fund of \$40,000 was raised by popular subscription to be distributed in doles. And yet it was in February of this winter, when local hardship was most acute, that the City Council voted to discontinue support of the highly successful tax-supported free employment office launched during the War and in operation for two and one-half years.²⁰

The mobility afforded by new modes of transportation combines with these periodic waves of employment, unemployment, and re-employment to diminish the tendency for the workers in a given factory to live together immediately about the plant. Everybody in Middletown in 1890 got to work by walking, and workers tended to settle in the immediate neighborhood of a given factory; as a new factory was located on the outskirts of the community it formed a magnet drawing new dwellings close about it.²¹ Today, when one gets about the city and the country surrounding it by bicycle, fifteen-

²⁰ The failure of the Council to vote the \$1,500 needed for the upkeep of the office caused its abandonment. Both Chamber of Commerce and Trades Council had favored the employment office and a leading local paper called it "one of the best investments ever made by the city and county." One powerful councilman, connected with a leading industry, is said to have led the opposition to the bureau, and is quoted as declaring the office of "no assistance whatever to the manufacturers or to the laboring man. If a man wants work in this city he can get it without going through the employment office." The office was abandoned and part of the director's salary left unpaid, although the State Attorney General ruled that the city was liable for it.

This incident affords an instance of the way much of the group business is conducted in Middletown and of the relative inarticulateness and helplessness of the group in the face of a powerful minority. The weaker of the two Middletown dailies called in vain for a frank statement of the nature of the "nigger in the woodpile" from "certain persons" who have made "a protracted effort . . . to end the official existence of the bureau."

²¹ E.g., the following from the local press in 1890: "Work has commenced on the Westside Glass Works. The location of this factory at Westside has caused a great demand for residences in that vicinity."

minute street-car service, regular bus service, and five interurban lines, and approximately two out of every three families in the city own a passenger automobile, decentralization of residence is apparent. A check of the residences of all workers in the shops of three local plants, a total of 2,171, showed that 28 per cent. lived within one-half mile of their places of work and 55 per cent. less than a mile away, while 45 per cent. lived a mile or more away; 20 per cent. of the men lived outside the city and from three to forty-five miles away,²² and 14 per cent. of the women lived from three to nineteen miles away. Two of these plants are old industries that have been in Middletown since gas boom days, while the third is a modern machine shop, located in Middletown more than a decade, of the sort that today dominates the city's industrial life. In the latter only 19 per cent. lived within one-half mile and only 43 per cent. within a mile, while 57 per cent. live over a mile away, and 29 per cent of the males lived three to forty-five miles away, the number of women employed being negligible.²³

This trend toward decentralization of workers' dwellings means that instead of a family's activities in getting a living, making a home, play, church-going, and soon, largely overlapping and bolstering each other, one's neighbors may work at shops at the other end of the city, while those with whom one works may have their homes and other interests anywhere from one to two-score miles distant.

Meanwhile, in season and out, regardless of such vicissitudes as unemployment, everybody who gets a living in Middletown is theoretically in process of "getting there"; the traditional social philos-

²² Five men went back and forth together in an automobile from a city of the same size forty-five miles distant.

Distances up to three miles were figured "as the crow flies" and are therefore somewhat underestimated.

²³ These addresses represent the summer force. In the machine shop, the bulk of whose employees require little training, the winter force is heavily recruited from farmers. (Cf. King, *op. cit.*, p. 91, for the reason agricultural labor flocks to the machine shops.) In response to a protest from local labor that they discriminated against city labor in the winter in favor of this cheaper-priced farm labor, Middletown manufacturers informed the Chamber of Commerce that they "consider [the] county a unit and not the city." The ease with which farmers can "when times are good" get work in machine shops and the general diffusion of Ford cars and surfaced roads is prompting some workers to return to small farms, preferably midway between Middletown and another small industrial city, where a garden can help out on food and work be drawn from either city.

ophy assumes that each person has a large degree of freedom to climb the ladder to ever wider responsibility, independence, and money income.²⁴ As a matter of fact, in six Middletown plants employing an average of 4,240 workers during the first six months of 1923²⁵ there were ten vacancies for foremen over a period of twenty-one months from January 1, 1923, to October 1, 1924.²⁶ This means that in a year and three-fourths there was a chance for one man in 424 to be promoted.²⁷ The total number of men estimated by the plants as of sufficient experience on January 1, 1923, to be eligible for consideration for promotion to foremanship was 531. Of this picked group one man in fifty-three got his chance in twenty-one months.²⁸

The chance of promotion as it appears to the working class may be glimpsed from the answers of the wives in 105 of the 124 sample families to the question, "What seems to be the future in your husband's job?" It was a time of considerable local unemployment. Ten of the 105 husbands were already out of work, and "future" meant hope for the naked chance to begin getting a living again at anything; for twenty-two other wives future meant nothing beyond the possible date when "the mister" would be laid off—for two of them this future was no further off than "next Saturday"; to four

²⁴ Thirty-four per cent. of 241 high school boys answered "true" to the extreme statement, "It is entirely the fault of a man himself if he does not succeed," while 16 per cent. more were "uncertain," and 49 per cent. thought the statement "false," the final 1 per cent. not answering. Forty-five per cent. of 315 girls thought the statement "true," while 9 per cent. were "uncertain," 44 per cent. marked it "false," and 2 per cent. did not answer.

²⁵ Average of total payrolls as of December 31, 1922, and June 30, 1923, less estimated averages of 600 foremen and office workers.

²⁶ One of the six plants reported vacancies over only eighteen months, from January, 1923, through June, 1924.

The condition of the Middletown labor market during these eighteen months can be seen in its setting from the index numbers of employment in seven leading plants given earlier in this chapter.

²⁷ The job of assistant foreman is not considered here, as it apparently counts for little. Promotion to a foremanship is the real step up.

²⁸ Not only were promotions infrequent, but during these twenty-one months a number of foremen were temporarily demoted to the ranks when forces were reduced, e.g., night shifts abandoned.

R. R. Lutz found that in the course of a year only one man in seventy-seven in a group of 618 eligible men in the metal trades in Cleveland had a chance of promotion. *The Metal Trades* (Cleveland; Cleveland Education Survey, 1916), p. 100.

others the future meant predominantly a fear of the old-age bread line; to eleven others a "good" future meant, "He'll probably have steady work"; nineteen others were hopeful in regard to their husbands' work and their chances in it;²⁹ while the remaining thirty-nine faced the future with no expressed hope of getting ahead. Of these thirty-nine, thirty-two, while not at the moment out of work or driven by an active fear of unemployment, voiced keen discouragement. Such answers as the following from this last group, to whom, with those unemployed or fearing a lay-off, the future shows no outlet toward greater security or recognition, reflect an outlook on life that probably conditions profoundly all their other activities:

(Husband a machinist, age thirty-eight.) "Well, he's been doing the same thing over and over for fifteen years, hoping he'd get ahead, and he's never had a chance; so I don't suppose he ever will."

(Husband a machinist, age twenty-six.) "There's nothing ahead where he's at and there's nothing to do about it."

(Husband a machine-tender, age forty-six.) "There won't never be anything for him as long as he stays where he is and I don't know where else he can go."

(Husband a foreman, age thirty-eight.) "He's been there nine years and there's no chance of promotion. The work is so hard he's always exhausted. He wants to get back on a farm. He's been lucky so far in not being laid off, but we're never sure."

(Husband a factory laborer, age thirty.) "He'll never get any better job. He'll be lucky if they keep him on this one."

And yet the chance of becoming a foreman, small as it is, would appear to be somewhat better than it was a generation ago. The experience of individual plants, cited below, suggests that foremen have increased more rapidly than the number of workmen. On the other hand, increasing technological complexity and the resulting tendency to insert college-trained technical men into a force between foremen and owners appear to hinder a workman's progress beyond a foremanship more than formerly.

²⁹ In one of these cases here counted as "hopeful" the wife said: "It's hard to say. There's not much opportunity for advancement but he is reading trade papers and studying his trade all the time to be able to take advantage of any opportunity that comes."

New technical developments such as the automobile and multiplied uses of electricity have opened new doors to some working men, enabling them to become owners of garages, filling stations, or electrical shops. The sharp increase in size, complexity, and cost of the modern machine-equipped shop, however, makes the process of launching out for oneself as a small manufacturer somewhat more difficult than a generation ago.

In general, the greater accessibility of those on the lower business rungs to sources of credit through lodge, club, church, and social contacts would seem to make fresh opportunities through the starting of a small industrial shop, retail store, or business of their own easier for them than for the working class. No direct study was made of the chance for promotion among the business group, and the local sentiment is such that one may not talk to business men and their wives about their personal advancement as one may to the working class. Close contact with Middletown's small shopkeepers and clerks as well as with the more powerful members of the business group throughout nearly a year and a half, however, yielded a distinct impression that psychologically the business families of the city tend to live, in the main, not on a plain stretching unbroken to the horizon, but on ground sloping upward, however gently. Contact with the working class, supplemented by interviews with the sample of wives and some of their husbands regarding the latter's chances of advancement, brought an equally clear impression that psychologically the outlook of the working class is somewhat flatter. The new rush of the children of the business man to college and of the working man's children to high school and college is increasing the vertical mobility of the children by offering all manner of short-cuts to the young man or woman with an education, but once established in a particular job, the limitations fixing possible range of advancement seem to be narrower for an industrial worker.

Vocational accidents are yet another differential accompaniment of getting a living for the two groups. Such accidents are practically unknown among the business class. For an average of 7,900 working men and women in the thirty-six factories constituting the industrial population of the city during the first half of 1923,⁸⁰ however,

⁸⁰ Payrolls of 7,743 and 9,655 on December 31, 1922, and June 30, 1923, respectively, were averaged, and since none of the accidents recorded concerned a

824 accidents serious enough to involve a loss of time from work were recorded during this six-month period. If this period can be taken as representative, roughly one in each five persons of the working class employed in factories in Middletown has an accident serious enough to make him stop getting a living for a while each year. Fifty-seven per cent. of these injured workers lost less than eight days, 13 per cent. lost eight days to two weeks, 1 per cent. two to three weeks, and the remaining 29 per cent. three weeks or more. Three of the 824 injured during these six months were killed, one other was expected to die at the time the figures were tabulated, two lost one eye and three lost permanent partial use of an eye, three lost a hand and six partial use of a hand, eight lost a finger and sixteen partial use of a finger, and so on.

We can only infer a trend toward fewer accidents. In view of the fact that in the year ending September 30, 1920, there were only 922 amputations out of a total of 42,994 accidents reported throughout the entire state, numerous records like the following in the Middletown press in 1890 suggest a very different frequency: In one leading plant, employing about 200 hands, three men were injured in one day in three different accidents—one losing a hand, a second having a foot mashed, and a third losing a finger. The last-named is reported as “another to lose a finger in the machinery where no less than five have been nipped off in the past month or so.” A superintendent in a leading plant employing about 200 men in 1890, when asked if working conditions then gave rise to a good many accidents, exclaimed:

“I should say they did! We kept a horse and buggy busy all the time taking men from the plant to the doctor.”

“Not literally, of course?”

“No, not literally, but we used to have one almost every day.”

The compulsory presence in each plant today of a first-aid kit

member of the office staff, an estimated total of 799 office employees was deducted from the payroll average of 8,699, the above figure of 7,900 resulting. A few very small industrial plants for whom records were not available are not included in the thirty-six above, also such groups of workers as the building trades, a few railroad mechanics, and other workers not in factories. The records of accidents were taken directly from the cards in the files of the State Industrial Board which administers the State Workmen's Compensation Law.

undoubtedly reduces infections;³¹ hernias are fewer, as there is less heavy lifting; plants are better built and aired, and such conditions, conducive to pneumonia and rheumatism, as those described by a glass worker in 1890, are far less common: "We worked dripping with sweat, burning up on the side facing the pots and freezing on the other side in winter in the draughty old plants." On the other hand the speed of the iron man has brought new health hazards all its own—nerve strain due to noise and speed, new types of localized ailments due to specialization of activity curtailing movement in many cases from the larger body segments to a few small muscles used over and over. Two under-officials in the packing room of a large glass plant agreed in saying that "there have been several nervous breakdowns since the installation of the belt conveyor bringing the jars to the women packers." And one added, "This system may be good for the plant, but it certainly isn't good for the girls."

Prior to 1897, when the first factory inspector was appointed in the state, the workman carried the full burden of accident under the common law principles of "assumed risk," "contributory negligence," and the "fellow servant" doctrine. In 1915 the trend towards group participation in such matters eventuated in a State Workmen's Compensation Law under which the industrial plant, and thus ultimately the general public, bear a share of the burden.³²

This process of the socialization of accident hazard is a phase of a larger trend towards impersonality in industrial operations in Middletown. Under the existing type of corporate ownership the presidents of three of the seven largest Middletown industrial plants today reside in other states, and two of the three plants are con-

³¹ One plant has a doctor in attendance, a second a graduate nurse but no doctor, two others have practical nurses, another a matron but no nurse, and a number use the local Visiting Nurses' Association, the company paying for the service in each case. All this is new since 1890.

³² The jungle of conflicting elements in a "social problem" is reflected in this case by two local situations: (1) The situation described in Ch. V [in *Middletown*] in which the adoption of casualty insurance has led in one large plant to a policy of "firing" all employees at sixty. (2) The fact that the company which is perhaps doing more than any other among the largest half-dozen in the city to care for its aging workers was reported by the State Industrial Board as "not in good standing"; this company, owned and operated by public-spirited citizens, had in 1925, according to the State Board, been carrying its own risk for three and a half years without the legal permission of the Board.

trolled by directors few of whom have ever even been in Middletown. This wide separation between a plant and the real authority over it combines with the increasing extent and complexity of the units of operation and the introduction of technically trained personnel to make it, in general, farther from the "floor" of a Middletown shop to the "office" today than a generation ago. Thus one plant whose sixty men in 1890 were officered by a president, a secretary who was also the chief engineer, a superintendent, and no foremen, today has for a force less than three times as large, a president, a vice-president (both largely inactive), a treasurer and general manager, a secretary who is also chief engineer, a superintendent, assistant superintendent, and three foremen. A second plant whose 200 men in 1890 were officered by a president, a vice-president who was also general manager, a secretary and treasurer, and two foremen, is operated today, with six times the original staff of workers, by a president, a vice-president and general manager, a treasurer, an assistant secretary, an assistant treasurer (largely inactive), an auditor, two superintendents, and thirty foremen. A third plant, a machine shop not locally owned and new since 1890, has a staff of 800 directed by a president (living out of the city), a resident vice-president who is also general manager, a second vice-president (inactive), a secretary, a comptroller, a factory manager, a general superintendent, three division superintendents, and twenty-five foremen.

More than one manufacturer said that he was no longer able to know his working force and their problems as he used to. One gains an impression of closer contact between many managers and their workers thirty-five years ago; we read in the press of 1890 of a plant closing down and owners and 176 workmen attending the funeral of one of the workers. On another occasion the management, unable to dismiss the force for a day at the county fair, ordered into the plant one hundred pounds of taffy from the fair grounds. Yet another old-time employer when he sold his plant a few years ago stipulated in his contract with the purchasers that the latter were to take over the entire force and keep all employees long enough to learn their worth before discharging any of them. This same man is reported to have sent \$500 to each of his foremen when he sold out, and he endowed a room at the local hospital for his old workers and their families.

A few Middletown industrial plants make an attempt to bridge the gap between shop and office by such devices as shop committees and short term training groups, including lectures on engineering and metallurgy by extension lecturers from the state university. One factory has a safety committee and another a nominal "council of foremen," with an appointed head. The character of these groups appears in the exclamation of one leading manufacturer, representative in this respect of the entire group, when asked about his "shop committee": "You don't mean collective bargaining or anything of that sort, I hope? *We're* running this plant and want no mistake about that. We won't tolerate any shop councils or anything of that sort." This plant is reported on reliable authority to have "thrown all sorts of obstructions in the way of the insurance people getting together with their foremen to talk over safety means in the plant." Personnel and welfare managers, appointed by four plants, occasionally exercise a personal oversight of the workers' problems; in one prominent plant, however, the kind of personnel adjustment work done is reflected by the emphatic statement of the personnel manager: "If a man is fired by a foreman, he stays fired. A thing a man does once in a department he'll do again in another."

These various devices, together with the carrying by at least three plants of a blanket life-insurance policy for all employees, the passage of the State Workmen's Compensation Law, and the appointment of state factory inspectors, represent tendencies to diminish somewhat the disparity between the accompaniments of getting a living for the working class and for the business group. But, while these new devices are attempting to solve the "social problems" involved in getting a living, the long arm of the job in this swiftly changing culture is touching the lives of workers as well as business class with new problems.

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PART IX

THE NEW DEAL AND ONE WORLD

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CHARLES AND MARY BEARD

LIKE MANY OTHER historians of first rank, Charles Beard is distinguished for the breadth of his interests and the scope of his work. Near the beginning of his career, Beard made a study of the economic content of the constitutional movement in the 1780's. With his wife, Mary, he devoted a good part of the next twenty-five years to a reinterpretation of the entire saga of our national development, published under the title *The Rise of American Civilization. America in Midpassage*, containing the Beards' analysis of the transition years between Coolidge and Franklin Roosevelt, constitutes the third volume of this study.

Even for the deans of American historians, a fair and objective appraisal of the New Deal was a formidable, perhaps an impossible, task. Looking back upon the controversial days of 1937 and 1938, during which this book was written, one finds it difficult to believe that anyone was in the neutral position which it was the Beards' obligation as historians to try to attain. Certainly the personal memoirs which have been produced in almost countless numbers testify to the strength of the political emotions of the time.

However, one could at least expect historians to make an effort to relate the Age of Roosevelt to previous eras and to the long-range trends of American development. In this respect, the Beards have not disappointed us. Their final appraisal of the New Deal is built upon their conclusion that, with very few exceptions, every act passed by Congress during the dramatic "hundred days" following Roosevelt's inauguration had prece-

dents within our national past. Instead of seeing this legislation as revolutionary, the Beards noted an affirmation and development of "humanistic democracy." Whereas conservative opponents of the Roosevelt administration had detected a conspiracy to overthrow property rights, the Beards observed that a large part of the New Deal expenditures was devoted to buttressing private enterprise and aiding in its rehabilitation.

Roosevelt's most bitter critics have accused him of promoting class warfare for the purpose of establishing a dictatorship in his own and labor's interests. Such a view runs counter not only to the Beards' emphasis upon the actions taken to conserve traditional forms but also to their description of Rooseveltian methods. Far from being a doctrinaire Marxist, with ready-made answers to the questions of government and business, the President appears to the Beards to have had no over-all plan of any kind. Actually, improvisation and ideological zigzagging marked every phase of New Deal activity. These inconsistencies and what was seen as a giant plot in the N.R.A. to establish an American fascism, led leftist critics to condemn Roosevelt as bitterly in behalf of the laboring class as the Liberty League denounced him for his assaults on corporate activities.

The obstacles which the Beards had to hurdle in their search for objective truth still exist to handicap those who attempt to criticize their analysis. Roosevelt still haunts American politics, and the welfare state which the Beards assumed to have arrived, at least in part, with the 1930's, continues to be a subject of large dispute in the 1950's. However, it seems proper to question whether the Beards, as historians interested in exploring the continuities of the national development, gave sufficient emphasis to what was new about the New Deal. Although they commented on the rejection of the ideal of free competition, they did not explore thoroughly the implications of a regulated economy. Even though they acknowledged the deep significance of the banking and currency legislation, they gave less than adequate attention to the effects of an intimate association be-

tween the government's financing operations and credit facilities and those of private industry. The immediate purpose of throwing the government's resources behind business may bear little resemblance to the ultimate results of the action.

Perhaps these criticisms are little more than complaints that the Beards were not prophets. Although the domestic New Deal was over by the time *America in Midpassage* was published, in 1939, the effects of its legislation are even now difficult to calculate. As historians, the Beards assumed the obligation of explaining the relation of these years to the ones which had preceded them. This task they fulfilled with a perspicacity which does justice to the best traditions of historical writing.

Reformation and Salvation

THRUSTING immediately at the fright induced by stresses and strains, President Roosevelt, in his inaugural address on March 4, 1933, called upon "a stricken Nation in the midst of a stricken world" to put aside fear and move forward to the conquest of the depression "as a trained and loyal army willing to sacrifice for the good of a common discipline" under the leadership that had just been placed in his care. This could be done in accordance with the terms of the Constitution, which "is so simple and practical that it is possible always to meet extraordinary needs by changes in emphasis and arrangement without loss of essential form." It was to be hoped that "the normal balance of Executive and legislative authority" would be wholly adequate to cope with the task that confronted the country; but the "unprecedented de-

From *America in Midpassage* by Charles and Mary Beard, copyright 1939 by The Macmillan Company and used with their permission.

mand and need for undelayed action may call for temporary departure from that normal balance of public procedure."

Unequivocally the incoming President described the sweep of the depression, ranging from the collapse of economic values to despair among "a host of unemployed citizens." There was no doubt about all that. "Only a foolish optimist can deny the dark realities of the moment. . . . Plenty is at our doorstep, but a generous use of it languishes in the very sight of the supply." Guilt was implied and the President passed judgment. "Primarily this is because rulers of the exchange of mankind's goods have failed, through their own stubbornness and their own incompetence, have admitted their failure, and have abdicated. Practices of the unscrupulous money changers stand indicted in the court of public opinion, rejected by the hearts and minds of men. . . . They know only the rules of a generation of self-seekers. They have no vision, and when there is no vision the people perish. Yes, the money changers have fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilization. We may now restore that temple to the ancient truths. The measure of the restoration lies in the extent to which we apply social values more noble than mere monetary profit." Thus the sentiment of dedication was sweetened for sinners by the idea that the primary scapegoats were the money changers—from whom investors had bought Allegheny common, Kreuger and Toll secured, sinking fund gold debentures, and other symbols of wealth in the riotous days of the prodigal son.

There must be a program. "There must be a strict supervision of all banking and credits and investments; there must be an end to speculation with other people's money; and there must be provision for an adequate but sound currency." That was an echo of Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom, especially soothing to the heirs of populism. But President Roosevelt did not stop with currency reform. "Our greatest primary task is to put people to work." There must be a wiser use of our great natural resources, a better balance of industry and agriculture, an increase in the value of agricultural products, protection for mortgaged homes and farms, a curtailment of government expenditures, a unification of relief work, and national planning for public utilities that have a definitely public character. In foreign relations we must follow "the policy of the good neighbor." No efforts will be spared to restore world trade by international

adjustments. Yet such trade relations, "though vastly important, are in point of time and necessity secondary to the establishment of a sound national economy. I favor as a practical policy the putting of first things first." In such terms the President's program was outlined.

The next step from talking was action. We must act; we must act quickly. We must act together. We are dependent upon one another; we must give as well as take. We must bend to discipline, for without discipline "no progress is made, no leadership becomes effective. . . . This I propose to offer," pledging the supremacy of the larger good. "With this pledge taken, I assume unhesitatingly the leadership of this great army of our people dedicated to a disciplined attack upon our common problems." The Constitution permits it, for it is so framed that the Government can meet every stress. Measures required by the stricken nation will be laid before Congress, and proper efforts will be made to secure a speedy adoption.

In case Congress fails to adopt or devise appropriate measures and the emergency continues to be critical, "I shall not evade the clear course of duty that will then confront me. I shall ask the Congress for the one remaining instrument to meet the crisis—broad Executive power to wage a war against the emergency, as great as the power that would be given to me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe. . . . We do not distrust the future of essential democracy. The people of the United States have not failed. In their need they have registered a mandate that they want direct, vigorous action. They have asked for discipline and direction under leadership. They have made me the present instrument of their wishes. In the spirit of the gift I take it."

In supporting the constitutional provision for a strong President, Hamilton, long before Roosevelt's day, had said in the sixty-ninth number of the *Federalist*: "Every man the least conversant in Roman history knows how often that republic was obliged to take refuge in the absolute power of a single man, under the formidable title of 'Dictator.' " The provision had been tested in war in 1861 and 1917. Now it was to be tested in time of peace. Or was it? Could an invocation of force command the energies of the nation for constructive purposes, for the building of a civilization? The future lowered over the present.

"This is a day of national consecration." With these words President Roosevelt had opened his inaugural address—words which were, in the process of editing, omitted from the definitive edition of his works published five years later. Having begun on this note, and having disclosed his resolve to act, to wield great powers in an attack upon calamity, the President, in bringing his address to a close, called for divine aid: "In this dedication of a Nation we humbly ask the blessings of God."

The ideas, "consecration" and "dedication," peculiarly fitted the popular mood of the hour. They suggested that the task to be undertaken had a sacred character; they throbbed with religious fervor. For centuries the preacher, Hebrew and Christian, in calling sinners to account, had reminded them of their wickedness and pointed out the narrow way leading to righteousness. Things had been done that should not have been done. Things that should have been done had been left undone. After years of reckless living, the nation had fallen upon evil days. A consciousness of sin was abroad in the land. The future was uncertain and even greater adversity might be hidden behind the morrow. "People are like . . . little children quarrelling, crying, and then straightaway laughing," Marcus Aurelius, Emperor of the Romans, had said in the second century of the Christian era. On March 4, 1933, in the United States, they were quarrelling and crying. They might be laughing again, as soon as a ray of prosperity broke through the clouds; but at the moment they were grieved, afraid, and repentant. Even the voice of the opposition presses and benches could be neither scornful nor ribald in the presence of the débâcle or of the Chief Executive scourging the wicked and seeking a road to the promised land.

Without waiting for Congress to assemble on March 9 to consider the state of the nation, in accordance with his official summons, President Roosevelt squared away for action on the Sunday following his inauguration. His advisers found sanction for government by decree in the unrepealed provisions of a war statute, enacted in 1917, giving the Chief Executive almost plenary control over foreign exchanges, gold, silver, and currency. Under the authority of this legislation President Roosevelt issued, at one o'clock in the morning of March 6, an order closing all the banks in the United States from Monday, March 6, to Thursday, March 9; and on the day of expiry

he extended it "in full force and effect until further proclamation." During the holiday all banking transactions were suspended, except those specifically authorized by the Secretary of the Treasury, with the approval of the President.

This decree, completing the closures already made under state authority, was designed to stop runs on banks and maintain the status quo until new legislation could be enacted by Congress—legislation safeguarding "sound" institutions, providing more currency, and establishing procedures for salvaging as far as possible the banks that were really in financial straits. If any lawyers were inclined to ask what constitutional authority the President had over state banks in time of peace, their question had no practical effect. With amazing unanimity, national leaders rallied to the support of the Executive's proposals. A conference of governors assembled at the White House on Monday, March 6, threw aside political affiliations, expressed confidence in the President, and urged all the people to coöperate with him "in such action as he shall find necessary or desirable in restoring banking and economic stability." On the instant the Constitution of the United States had acquired an extraordinary flexibility and the rights of sovereign states over banking had been, for practical purposes, abrogated.

When Congress gathered in special session on March 9, the Chief Executive was cautious. He did not propose anything specific and radical, such as nationalizing banks of issue. He merely laid before Congress a message calling for blanket authority over banks and the draft of a bill conferring it. With an alacrity suggesting spontaneous combustion, excited Representatives and Senators rushed the draft through the two houses and placed it on the President's desk before the close of the day. Neither Lincoln in 1861 nor Wilson in 1917 had been granted drastic powers with so little haggling and bickering. That "democracy can act," in accord with its normal processes, in a crisis, had been conclusively demonstrated.

The new legislation gave the President authority in time of war or "any other period of national emergency" to resort to extraordinary measures in respect of currency and banking. It empowered the Treasury to compel the surrender of all gold coin, bullion, and gold certificates in exchange for other coin or currency issued under the laws of the United States. Conservators for national banking insti-

tutions were provided. National Banks were allowed to raise cash by the sale of preferred stock, and arrangements were made for permitting both national and state institutions to borrow from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. Steps were taken to expand the currency for immediate needs in the form of "circulating notes" issued to Federal Reserve banks on the basis of federal obligations and other prime paper.

In appearance the Act was an emergency measure, but President Roosevelt was looking beyond the exigencies of the day. In his mind it was "to mark the beginning of a new relationship between the banks and the people of the country." The Act was not the nationalization of banking and currency that had been demanded by one wing of Jacksonian Democracy. It drove no money changers from the temple. On the contrary it gave the support of public credit to bankers while establishing the supremacy of the Federal Government over gold. Time was to amplify the meaning.

Under the authority of the emergency legislation, during an inquiry into the soundness of institutions in difficulty, the Secretary of the Treasury permitted the gradual resumption of the banking business. By the end of May nearly thirteen thousand banks were reported open without restriction. As they held almost ninety per cent of the total amount on deposit throughout the United States, it seemed that the immediate emergency had passed. Viewed superficially, the remaining problem was one of determining the fate of state and national banks yet in a dubious position. Nevertheless other fiscal events of major significance for American economy were soon set in train.

Among them was the modification, if not the abandonment, of the gold standard as the basis of the monetary system—a violation of the fundamental principle written into law in 1900, four years after the "battle of 1896 for the salvation of the country." By the legislation of 1900 a certain weight and fineness of gold was made the foundation of the American dollar and all other currency was made exchangeable in terms of gold. Two essential elements were embraced in the system: gold, a privately owned commodity in general circulation, was chosen as the substance on which the dollar rested and all paper money could be freely exchanged for that precious metal. While gold certificates issued by the Government had a certain

priority, possessors of other paper currency could nominally demand gold in exchange. The "free" movement of gold thus established for internal economy was also extended to international transactions and gold circulated "freely" among the nations in the operations of their commerce.

Although this gold system, as far as the United States was concerned, was little more than thirty years old, it had become embedded in American business thought and in popular psychology. Actually it had acquired some of the characteristics of a fetish, a sacred thing, absolutely indispensable to the functioning of industry and commerce on any level of efficiency. To touch it or to threaten it was to profane the very altar of Fortune. It was true that Great Britain, the modern originator of the gold standard for universal purposes, had abandoned it, or at least cut loose from it, but the major portion of American economists seemed to regard the British revision as a temporary procedure, and in any case no guide for American policy.

Whether Great Britain had been "forced" off the gold base or had voluntarily "gone" off made little difference. The fact remained and it impinged upon American policy. Either from necessity or as a matter of policy, the United States gradually followed the British example in some respects, as the Chief Executive became convinced that gold was not, after all, a veritable pillar of heaven. "Gradually" is the correct word, and "in some respects" must be attached to it. The very closing of the banks on March 6, 1933, impaired the gold standard, for citizens could not then demand gold for any gold certificates which they held. The gold standard was further impaired when the banks were reopened, for they were forbidden to pay out gold or gold certificates. Another step was taken on April 5 when the President issued an order prohibiting the hoarding of gold and requiring the delivery of all gold coin, bullion, and certificates to Federal Reserve banks on or before April 28, with minor exceptions for industrial and other purposes. A supplement to this measure, in August, prohibited all private holdings of gold and all private transactions in gold. Thus two phases of the gold system were destroyed, namely, private ownership of gold coins or bullion and free transactions in that metal.

With transactions in gold hampered by the banking crisis and

forbidden by executive order, Congress faced the issue of public and private contracts calling for payments in gold values. Previous to 1933 it had been a practice of governments and private concerns in the United States to stipulate that their bonds and other evidences of indebtedness which they sold were payable in gold coin "of the present standard of value." Obligations running into the billions contained this "gold clause." After March 6, however, it became impossible to fulfill all such contracts.

Of course, fulfillment had always been a mere matter of theoretical probability. Now it had become even theoretically impossible. President Roosevelt recognized the fact. Congress agreed and by a joint resolution, effective June 6, 1933, it folded the mantle of law over the fact and the theory. It declared that the right to require the payment of gold obligations in gold was "against public policy" and that such obligations could be lawfully satisfied by payment in any coin or currency "which at the time of payment is legal tender for public and private debts." Looking to the future, Congress prohibited the issuance of new obligations containing the gold clause. In short, in the emergency, one of the "most sacred elements" in public and private contracts was swept aside by national legislation. Had the spirit of Daniel Shays returned or was there a necessity that knew not law?

While "the eternal foundations of sound economy" seemed to be dissolving like vapory figments of the imagination, the agrarian interests in Congress grew bolder and made a concerted drive on the retreating Old Guard of the Gold Army. The ghost of 1896 had not been buried after all. The Senate and the House were crowded with members who could recall Bryan's picture of mankind crucified on a cross of gold; but for forty years advocates of inflation and free silver had been baffled by the protagonists of sound money. Now in an hour of crisis their victory seemed to be in sight. If it had not been for the opposition of President Roosevelt, they might have exploded the gold works then and there.

In the circumstances they were able to do no more than declare their sentiments and confer upon him powers to be used at his discretion. Appropriately, they incorporated their principles in the farm relief law of May 12, 1933, known as the Agricultural Adjustment Act. Their main purposes were declared to be to offset the

effects of depreciated foreign currencies on American foreign commerce, to maintain a parity among the currency issues of the United States, and to meet the economic emergency by an expansion of credit.

For the attainment of these ends, the President was authorized, not commanded, to use the Federal Reserve System in purchasing and holding obligations of the United States in an aggregate sum of \$3,000,000,000. If this device could not be applied, then the President might direct the Treasury to issue three billion dollars' worth of legal tenders for the purpose of meeting the maturing obligations of the Government or purchasing its obligations in the market. Attacking their principal foe, gold, the agrarians empowered the President to reduce the weight of the gold dollar by fifty per cent at most, and to fix the weight of the silver dollar at a definite ratio to the gold dollar. Notwithstanding the defeat of efforts to force the coinage of silver at the ratio of sixteen to one, the President was authorized to accept a certain amount of silver from foreign debtors and issue silver certificates against it. Later the silver faction was able to force through a measure declaring that, in the monetary system of the United States, silver shall constitute one-fourth in value as against three-fourths in gold, and directing the Treasury to buy silver within a certain price range per ounce, store it, and issue silver certificates. Nevertheless its declaration of sentiments was in fact largely academic—a threat, not an achievement—since President Roosevelt did little or nothing under the inflationist sections of the Agricultural Adjustment Act.

After all, William Jennings Bryan was dead. A Kerensky might be on the horizon of fervid imaginations, but no Bryan was there any more. When Congress recovered from the first shocks of the crisis and came to formulating the Banking Act of 1933, conservatives took the lead and steered close to their well-known headlands. An inducement was made to bring more state banks into the Federal Reserve System, by permitting federal banks to open branches in states which gave a similar permission to their own banks. Stricter supervision was established over banks, holding companies, and affiliates, and banks were required to cut loose, within a year, from affiliated security concerns. In this way, it was hoped, some patent abuses in the

investment business would be eliminated. With a view to holding down speculation, while providing accommodations to business and commerce, the Federal Reserve Board was given large powers over the purchase and sale of eligible paper by member banks. To remove fears and lure money out of hoards, a temporary scheme for insuring deposits up to a certain amount was put into effect.

Despite some alarms on the right, the Banking Act of 1933 was conservative from start to finish, from the standpoint of agrarian inflationists. The limited power to issue currency was still vested in private hands. Banks of issue were not nationalized. Private banking was not confined to commercial business. The original compromise between centralization and states' rights was preserved in its essential features.

A search for some overarching hypothesis of consistency to explain the various currency and banking measures led to the White House rather than to Capitol Hill. In Congress every action took the form of an adjustment of interests. The Chief Executive, on the other hand, gave out a series of statements that had the merits of a certain congruity, especially in relation to the basic rights of property. He was seeking, he declared, to "restore commodity price levels," to facilitate the payment of public and private debts "more nearly at the price level at which they were incurred," to effect a balance in the price system "so that farmers may exchange their products for the products of industry on a fairer exchange basis." The question whether the measures adopted would accomplish the posited ends might be debated, but here at least was a clear objective. Beyond these adjustments in the price system, President Roosevelt looked to stabilization—the establishment and maintenance of a dollar "which will not change its purchasing and debt-paying power during the succeeding generation." In appearance this was the time-worn scheme for overcoming the calamities of depression by currency manipulation, but other measures of the administration made it plain that the day for pure and simple reliance on any such device had passed.

In the process of seeking to raise the price level and stabilize it, President Roosevelt had to take account of international aspects of the currency system. Here, too, he was positive as to objectives. He

declared that the dollar had too long been at the mercy of accidents in international trade, the internal policies pursued by other nations, and political disturbances in other continents. "Therefore," he said, "the United States must take firmly in its own hands the control of the gold value of our dollar. This is necessary in order to prevent dollar disturbances from swinging us away from our ultimate goal, namely, the continued recovery of our commodity prices. . . . My aim in taking this step [of buying and selling gold] is to establish and maintain continuous control. . . . We are thus continuing to move toward a managed currency." Whether it was possible, in fact, to manage the domestic price system and at the same time cushion it against the shocks of foreign-trade oscillations was a matter of dispute among schoolmen. Nor was it easy, if at all feasible, to find out whether multitudinous practices did indeed conform to the controlling hypothesis of policy. Even so, the departure from the conception of the "free" market, national and international, with gold as the unit of exchange, seemed to close an epoch.

While making much ado over the alleged expulsion of money changers from the temple and the revision of the currency and banking system, Congress turned to public finance. "Our government's house is not in order," President Roosevelt declared to the special session called in March, 1933. He reminded it of the Democratic promise of economy and warned the members that "too often in recent history liberal governments have been wrecked on rocks of loose fiscal policy." Well aware of log-rolling propensities among Senators and Representatives, he demanded and received a broad authority to reduce payments to war veterans and to cut, within certain limits, the salaries of government employees. Proceeding under the provisions of the Economy Act, the President effected changes, consolidations, and reductions which, it was estimated, would bring savings amounting to nearly a billion dollars in the next budget. Collaterally, federal revenues were raised by new taxes, on legalized beer, gasoline, new capital stock, and excess profits. After conventions in the requisite number of states had ratified, in December, 1933, the twenty-first amendment, repealing prohibition, Congress joined state legislatures in a scramble to derive heavy revenues from alcoholic beverages.

Taking the position that emergency peace expenditures, like war expenditures, constituted a class in themselves and should be at least partly financed by bond issues, Roosevelt proposed to set up a double budget. Outlays for emergency purposes were to be met by borrowings, and the budget of ordinary or current expenditures was to be balanced by curtailments in expenditures and increases in revenues. As a matter of fact the Government of the United States had never possessed a budget which clearly separated capital outlays from current running expenses. From the beginning Congress had made appropriations from tax revenues to pay for roads, waterway improvements, lighthouses, buildings, and other public works of various kinds. Some states and many cities had established the distinction and had regularly borrowed money for public improvements and emergency outlays, often making provision for meeting interest and installment charges as they fell due. But Congress had not followed these examples. Nor had the Government of the United States ever set up a capital balance sheet, showing on the one side the federal debt and on the other its real and intangible properties which could be deemed offsetting assets. For example, the money borrowed for the Reconstruction Finance Corporation was properly placed under the head of federal debt, but the securities pledged by private concerns with the Corporation as collateral undoubtedly formed assets of some value that belonged, with equal propriety, on the credit side. Accordingly, there was a promise of more realistic finance in Roosevelt's proposal. However, he did not work it out in detail or apply it with precision. Despite all the pledges, mounting deficits marked the dealings of Congress and the Administration.

In connection with the "purification" and readjustment of the financial system, Congress laid its hands on the National Shrine in Wall Street by extending federal control over the issue of certain types of securities for which a high degree of market freedom had hitherto existed. The scheme of control was embodied in the Securities Act, approved May 27, 1933, and later given a more permanent form in the Securities and Exchange Act. In part the legislation expressed the indignation of investors and speculators who had suffered losses in the pools, peggings, balloon ascensions, and other operations of the great boom. In part also the law had a bearing upon

banking, currency, and the functioning of economy in the broadest sense of the term.

Although it was not easy to draw the legal line between "honesty" and "fraud" in security transactions, between sober judgment and absurd hopes, the revelations of past transactions made by the Senate committee on banking and finance created an overwhelming sentiment in favor of additional protection for investors. Irrespective of the intention, the drafting of merely protective features was difficult. The determination of the kinds of new liquid claims to wealth that actually represented real wealth called for prognosis no less than diagnosis. Additional complications sprang from the fact that banking was entangled in the process of issuing stocks and bonds: many liquid claims in the form of securities were employed as the basis for the expansion of the currency by members of the Federal Reserve System. That the raising of capital funds by the sale of securities bore some relation to the forms and operations of industry was also undeniable. Was it possible, by positive restrictions on the freedom of the market, to compel banks and sellers of securities to discharge the function which they had been supposed to perform: that of acting as mediators between investors and productive enterprises in need of capital goods? The situation was perplexing and Congress struck out pragmatically.

After exempting from the operations of the Act a long list of securities, such as government bonds and commercial paper of limited scope, Congress stipulated that other securities must be registered with the Federal Trade Commission, later the Securities and Exchange Commission especially created. In all cases registration was to disclose specific information respecting the nature, sponsorship, and substance of the paper tendered to the public. Among the items of information required were the names, addresses, and functions of the persons connected with the "issuer" of the security, including directors and officers of the corporation concerned, underwriters, persons owning more than ten per cent of the stock, salaries paid to officers and directors, and commissions paid to participants.

From personnel, Congress turned to substance. It called upon the issuer for information respecting the funded debt already outstanding, the amount and purpose of the security offered, properties to be acquired by the capital raised, material contracts arising in con-

nection therewith, balance sheets, profit and loss statements, and articles of incorporation. Subject to exceptions and modifications, foreign securities were brought within the same frame of control. For the benefit of investors, essential parts of the information filed with the Commission were to be made matters of public record. Remedies at law were provided against participants guilty of making untrue statements or concealing facts essential to the broad purposes of the Act. Heavy penalties were set for persons who transgressed the law, subject to judicial safeguards in case of violations due to justifiable conditions or the fallibility of human judgment. To protect American holders of foreign securities, Congress provided for the creation of a semi-private Corporation of Foreign Security Holders empowered to look after the interests of investors whose paper was in default.

During the debates on the original bill in Congress and outside, protests were lodged against the severity of the restrictions proposed against violations of the liberty long enjoyed in pecuniary transactions—the liberty deemed essential to dynamic enterprise. In the light of available information respecting the spoliation of investors in the age of Coolidge prosperity, few critics were brash enough at first to demand complete *laissez faire* in the grand style. Yet many were ready to insist that the restraints of the bill would deprive industry of needed capital, paralyze the enterprise of bankers and initiators, and slow down the process of recovery. In the theory of business enterprise, room had always been made for the element of risk; the mechanical laws of economics did not work perfectly; at the side of or in the interstices of the network composed of going concerns lay possibilities of chance that might result in either profit or loss.

Indeed there were a few economists who maintained that, in the regime of corporate management, this operation of whirling Fortune's wheel was the chief function left to the business man. If losses ensued, they must be accepted. If the divination was correct, new and great enterprises might rise, enriching individual promoters and adding to the sum total of national wealth. It mattered little that the modern devotee of Fortune used other people's money. It was the function that counted.

Vibrating between the idea of economic law and the conception

of economic chance, with freedom for business ingenuity and risk, Congress tossed to and fro over the terms of the securities bill. In the end it declared that numerous economic activities traditionally regarded as a part of the free system should be forbidden, but that some leeway should be granted to pecuniary enterprise under the protection of the courts. When the provisional legislation was recast in the Securities and Exchange Act of 1934, its restrictions were tightened and enforcement was entrusted to a special body, the Securities and Exchange Commission.



The word "never" is to be used sparingly in history. It could be said with due respect for the record, however, that never before had Congress in the course of two years enacted legislation running so widely and deeply into American economy. Perhaps it would be no exaggeration to declare that all the federal legislation from the establishment of the Constitution down to the inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt in the spring of 1933 had not flouted so materially the presuppositions of "free enterprise" and the doctrine of *laissez faire*.

How did this happen, and what was its meaning? Was it, as heated imaginations suggested, a revolution or the beginning of a revolution? Or did it merely bring to a closer focus theories and practices long in process of development, without marking a sharp break in the course of events? Was it an illustration of Edmund Burke's dictum that greater changes may be effected in society by accretion and accumulation over a period of years than by a sudden revolution radically executed? Or was it a tempest in a teapot that would subside when wheat sold again at a dollar a bushel, if it should do so again, and the United States Steel Corporation resumed the payment of dividends? As always, where freedom of opinion is permitted, diversity of opinion raged over such fundamental questions.

On the verdict to be reached, history threw some light. Behind each statute of the New Deal legislation lay a long series of agitations, numerous changes in the thought and economy of American society, and pertinent enactments. Except for certain sections of the

National Industrial Recovery Act, not a single measure passed by Congress in 1933 and 1934 was without some more or less relevant precedent; and this Act, in departing from the philosophy of anti-trust individualism, reflected conceptions that had been associated with the apparently inexorable concentration of control in industrial economy. Had there been no profound dislocations connected with the panic, the movement of ideas and interests in this economy would have continued, unless history itself came to an end. But the depression had introduced fear, uncertainty, and distress, had cut established connections loose from customary points of contact, had shaken many rigid opinions, and, to use a metaphor, had made social relations more fluid. Where everything seemed afloat, particular interest gained more liberty of action and found more companions in misery ready to coöperate. When industry was prosperous, it could defy or hold the agrarians in check. When both branches of economy were in peril of ruin, industrialists and agrarians were readier to make concessions, truces, and combinations that rendered possible the flood of far-reaching legislation.

In this legislation was there anything revolutionary? If by revolution is meant the overthrow of one class by another, a sudden and wholesale transfer of property, then all the New Deal laws combined effected no revolution. Nor were they intended to do so. The Agricultural Adjustment Act deprived no farmer, planter, or wheat-raising corporation of land. The Recovery Act stripped no industrial concern of its tangibles. The two laws were designed to set agriculture and industry in motion without changing property holdings or property relations. The former did little or nothing for tenants, and nothing at all for mere laborers on the land. Indeed, by forcing the curtailment of crops, it reduced employment for farm laborers. If the Recovery Act made a gesture in the direction of collective bargaining, it merely referred to a principle easily violated by obstinate practice. In saving distressed banks, the Government saved depositors. The departure from the gold standard enriched gold-mining concerns. Concessions to silver swelled the profits of interests engaged in extracting that metal, thus giving value to property once stagnant or of no value. The credit and money-lending legislation was framed to protect the holders of railway, bank, and real estate securities against grievous losses, and to enable debt-burdened farm-

ers and home owners to avoid the stringent processes of liquidation.

And that was done by placing the credit of the Government, that is, the collective public, under disaster-ridden private enterprises, by adding billions to the national debt, by shifting the major portion of the burden to indirect taxes, including heavy excises on alcoholic liquors after the repeal of the Prohibition Amendment in December, 1933, and by postponing, in an effort to avoid, a day of reckoning. If a change in things was thus effected, it was the change of tying private interests more closely into a single network and making the fate of each increasingly dependent upon the fate of all. From the process a revolution might develop, but that would be another historical illustration of events outrunning purposes, of mankind building better or worse than it knows.

The business was too complicated, however, for any neat theory of revolutionary dialectic—the overturn of one class by another until the final day of the communist spring into everlasting freedom or the totalitarian jump into the thousand year period of the corporate state. When history was conceived not as handsprings into liberation but as the movement of ideas and interests in time, with occasional broad jumps occurring, then the events of 1933 and 1934 seemed merely to mark the dissolution of once firm assurances and a modification of many theories and practices.

Whatever the near or distant outcome might be, the New Deal legislation did indicate fundamental doubts respecting many ideas, long current, as good always and everywhere in American society. It marked a general surrender of the doctrine that poverty and unemployment come only from the improvidence of the poor and that the persons affected must take the consequences of their futile and evil lives. It repudiated the Darwinian law of the jungle by seeking to eliminate through concerted action—mutual aid—innumerable practices of competition once deemed right and just, including the shifting of capitalists' strains to labor in the form of wage cutting. For more than forty years, statesmen and demagogues alike had sought by antitrust acts to intensify the ruthless struggles of competition, on the assumption that such conflicts in economy were wholesome and that the downward pressure of competition on labor was of no concern to the State of Society.

Besides casting off the formulas of economic Darwinism, New

Deal legislation brought forcibly into national thought a recognition of persistent agrarian claims, affecting the conception of a balanced economy. For more than a hundred years philosophic agrarians had insisted that capitalism and its price system, with or without the protective tariff, worked against agriculture, exploited it, drained the land of its bone and sinew, failed to do justice to labor on the soil. For more than a hundred years economic thought had been steadily growing urban in outlook. To quote a European wag, it was the work of asphalt flowers. But the crisis of 1933, the Agricultural Adjustment Act and supplementary measures thrust agrarian economy into the center of national policy.

With the powerful aid of the Government, farmers were at last enabled to imitate industrial practices in time of depression, namely, to curtail production, reduce losses, and turn laborers adrift to shift for themselves. As Secretary Wallace conceded, this was the economy of scarcity with a vengeance, but if the medicine was good for industrialists it might be good for farmers. Although it brought forth wails of disgust from urban editors, publicists, and propagandists, it called popular attention to the fundamental principles of capitalist economy and suggested a general revision. If an economy of abundance, that is, general prosperity, was ever to be established in the United States, both industry and agriculture would have to undergo some kind of transformation, escape from the bondage of the so-called "effective demand," from the periodical restriction of production to meet reduced buying power.

On a final balance sheet struck at the close of 1934 it was only in the matter of banking and currency that New Deal legislation offered the possibility of resolute implications. The gold standard, with the interchangeability of currencies, was abandoned. For this formula, Respectability had waged a hot campaign in 1896. Then it had deemed the gold standard so nearly a command of God and Nature that few words could be too bitter or vile enough to characterize opponents. In 1933 the everlasting gold foundations slipped out from under the economy of society, leaving it very much as it was before, if no more happy and secure. By other enactments Congress declared that banks, investment houses, and stock exchanges could not be relied upon to keep business enterprise in motion, to protect the public against exploitation, and to fulfill the moral obli-

gations of fiduciary trust. That, too, was a blow to Respectability's sense of private virtue. Had it not been for the opposition of President Roosevelt as a guardian of vested rights, Congress might have gone far beyond these measures. According to the reports of seasoned newspaper men in Washington, a large number, perhaps a majority, of the Senators and Representatives were prepared, in the spring of 1933, to abolish stock exchanges, nationalize banks of issue, and reduce the substance of fixed claims to wealth by a huge inflation of the currency.

Had the restraining hand of the Chief Executive been released, a conjuncture of physical distress and financial maladies might have culminated in that form of revolution known as inflation. The immense structure of fixed debt, public and private, with its heavy claims on the returns of real property and the wages of labor, might have been pulled down close to the earth, if not entirely liquidated. But by maneuvering, by accepting powers without using them, President Roosevelt helped to prevent that convulsion. In so doing, he probably interpreted correctly the popular judgment; for in the congressional elections of 1934 the active voters, contrary to the mid-term tradition, increased the Democratic delegations in the House and Senate, diminished the strength of the Republican opposition, and seemed to approve the course which things had taken under the management of the Chief Executive. The returns of the balloting divulged no evidences of an overwhelming demand for a program more radical or for a retreat upon the way thus far chosen. It was with renewed confidence, then, that Roosevelt announced to Congress on January 4, 1935, a broader scheme of action touching the wiser use of natural resources, social insurance, and security of homes.

By that time, however, the immense strain thrown upon the nerves, sentiments, and acquisitive instincts of individuals had begun to snap the bonds of coöperation imposed by fear, law, and administration. Indeed for that strain the people had been ill-prepared by knowledge, understanding, and acceptance of responsibilities; and their leaders, especially those trained in schools and colleges, had been no better prepared. From decade to decade it had been revealed in the census returns of industry, agriculture, and labor, that the self-sufficing homestead and community were dying and that all

the interests, occupations, properties, and callings of the nation were being drawn into a tighter and tighter web of economic interdependence. The commodities and articles produced in each center or region were scattered broadcast throughout the Union in exchange for goods of use and consumption. The complete independence of the farming family that satisfied all its own wants had almost vanished. For isolated individualism, always overemphasized in American thought and teaching, was substituted an interlaced system of exchange and mutuality correctly described as collectivism.

Yet the very word that described the fact excited horror among editors, professors, teachers, school superintendents, public mentors in general, and their disciples, who, in accordance with immemorial practice, repeated by rote the axioms and maxims received from high instructors. The mental imagery of the past was employed to combat the present and the future. So the deep-seated propulsions of private interest found sanction in the phrases of Respectability for a drive to the very end of acquisition.

For a brief season, in the spring of 1933, fear—blanched fear—held these propulsions in leash and counseled unity and coöperation. This counsel was incorporated in an open letter directed to the governors' conference by a committee of representative citizens on March 6 of that year. "We are convinced," said the signers of the manifesto, "that there is throughout the nation a spontaneous spiritual uprising of confidence and hope in our chosen leader. The nature of our national crisis calls for an expression of this confidence in the combined voice of the people to show that they are behind him, alert and vocal and united in heart. Prompt and decisive action of a national scope, and in several directions, is necessary to prevent economic collapse throughout the land. The ordinary operations of government that prevail and are suitable in time of prosperity with normal conditions may be too slow to meet adequately this emergency and avoid the danger of this economic avalanche carrying all before it." In this spirit the citizens' committee appealed to the governors and the Congress of the United States to support the President and our institutions, "thus enabling the whole people to declare in unison their confidence and faith in our President." That would, they asserted, "constitute the people's appeal to the patriotism of Congress, which we know they possess, in common with all,

to coöperate with the President in taking such action as will guarantee economic stability, restore confidence, and thereby relieve unemployment and widespread distress."

This memorandum and appeal, framed during the great fear, was signed by William Green for the American Federation of Labor; Louis J. Taber, master of the National Grange; Edward O'Neal, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation; His Eminence George Cardinal Mundelein; Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick; Rabbi Stephen Wise; Alfred E. Smith; Newton D. Baker; Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler; H. G. Harriman, president of the United States Chamber of Commerce; Daniel Willard, president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railway; and Walter Lippmann, publicist. In a few months some of the signers were to turn against President Roosevelt and his prompt and decisive actions "of a national scope," and denounce legislation of Congress apparently enacted to "guarantee economic stability." But in March they all joined in the "spiritual uprising of confidence and hope."

However interpreted, the appeal and the revolt had a bearing upon the nature of the great upheaval. Were the signers only united in support of the President until banks and financial institutions had been saved by the outpouring of public credit? Or did they deem his prompt and decisive actions "of a national scope" to be inappropriate guarantees of "economic stability?" Or were they alarmed by subsequent measures framed to "relieve unemployment and widespread distress?" Whatever the answer, the distinguished signers of the appeal for national solidarity evidently believed in March, 1933, that the crisis was national in scope and that national measures alone could cope with it; and in this belief they had a solid basis of facts evident to open eyes.

Nevertheless the high tension of unity reflected in the appeal steadily relaxed after the banks and financial institutions of the country had been saved, at least for a time, by the actions of the Roosevelt administration. Nowhere dominant was there a program of concerted and defensible unity, inspired by strong resolve and informed by realistic knowledge, to continue, expand, and apply effectively the recognition accorded to the collective character of American economy. Nowhere available was there a scheme of tested thought and moral principle to sustain such a program. Nowhere

available was there a body of tried, trained, and loyal public servants to fill all the top positions of administration required to discharge skillfully the functions so suddenly imposed upon the Government of the United States. Nor did the President seem able, during the uproar and haste of time, to draw together all the duties so suddenly assumed, assure efficiency, and explain to the nation the fullness of the designs taking shape in Washington. In such circumstances bustle and improvisation characterized political action. Either because too much was undertaken or the requisite abilities were lacking or the strain was too great for private interests, the devices adopted by the administration began to disintegrate, the acquisitive instinct seized upon its opportunities for satisfaction, individualists called "chiselers" fell upon the spoils, and the "spontaneous spiritual uprising" of March, 1933, dissolved. A large part of the economic, intellectual, and moral leadership that had rallied to the New Deal melted away. The "brain trust" composed of a few intimate advisers, disbanded. Still, President Roosevelt continued to command a majority of voters.

ALFRED KAZIN

ALFRED KAZIN'S *On Native Grounds* is a book for which historians are particularly grateful. It deals with the literary history of the period since the 1890's in a way which historians understand—that is, as an expression of American society. Based upon a huge fund of specialized knowledge and a highly developed insight into literary expression, it does for historians what they could not do for themselves.

A comparison of this study with Vernon L. Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought* suggests itself at once. Both authors have a sociological point of departure. Yet Parrington was ultimately concerned with the political and economic meaning of literary works, whereas Kazin is interested in constructing from them the contours of the general intellectual environment. Indeed, Parrington was so insistent upon compressing literature into categories labeled "liberal" and "conservative" that he had little time for considering individual books of any kind on their own merits, and no space at all for works labeled "belletristic"—that is, which offer no substantial evidence of their author's social views. Avowedly a "Jeffersonian" by conviction and a Populist by training, Parrington approached his writing with deep feeling and a thesis which divided all writers into two groups—friends of democracy and its enemies.

Kazin's mood is calmer. As a critic, he chooses to place himself in a middle position between the two extremes of the Marxists, "who could study a work of art only in terms of its social relations," and the Formalists or New Critics, "who study lit-

erature precisely because it has no social relations at all." Rejecting both of these naïve totalitarianisms, Kazin holds the moderate view that although literature proceeds from a society, it is the product of men and not of trends, constituting a series of distinct even if representative creations.

The cohesive element in Kazin's study does not approach the definiteness of Parrington's theme. The author is well aware that he has less a thesis than a starting-point—the need to describe comprehensively the consequences apparent in literature of the disruptive change from an agricultural society to an industrialized, urban culture. In performing this task, Kazin is balanced and trustworthy, yet he lacks Parrington's intensity and originality.

However judicious, *On Native Grounds* is neither dull nor dispassionate. Its author's mind is too quick, its diction too incisive and energetic to permit a lag. And although Kazin has no very explicit propositions to prove, he has moral convictions which guide his judgments and break down the sense of detachment. Perhaps this is why he is so often disappointed in American literature. In any case, his standards are high and he seems more ingenious in laying bare our literary deficiencies than our achievements.

The economic collapse after 1929 ushered in a period of crisis, the intellectual repercussions of which are still being felt. Writing in 1942, Kazin was certainly in no position to tell what the final outcome would be, or even to see the various elements in the literary scene in their correct proportion. For example, his emphasis upon the Marxist school of criticism now seems exaggerated. On the other hand, he has captured the sense of insecurity which blended with the realism of the decade. Perhaps even more significantly, he has given an extended treatment to the affirmative note which arose in the midst of great problems. The rediscovery of the American past, the rising awareness of a need to know American culture—indeed, the discovery that there *was* an American culture—are a part of the history of this

decade often lost sight of by historians whose eyes are fastened on employment charts and political reforms. Kazin succeeds in communicating to the reader a sense of the limitations of this affirmation, its frequent sentimentalism and uncriticalness, yet also something of the excitement and positive values implicit within it.

Whatever its errors—and there are not many apparent to a historian—*On Native Grounds* reveals to historians their weaknesses as students of the literary aspects of the American past and at the same time offers substantial help in overcoming them.

America! America!

"Do you know that European birds have not half the melody of ours?"
—ABIGAIL ADAMS to John Adams

UNDERLYING the imaginative life in America all through the years of panic, depression, and the emergence of international civil war was an enormous body of writing devoted to the American scene that is one of the most remarkable phenomena of the era of crisis. That literature has hardly run its course, and it may even dominate the scene for many years to come; but for all its shapelessness and often mechanical impulse, it is a vast body of writing that is perhaps the fullest expression of the experience of the American consciousness after 1930, and one that illuminates the whole nature of prose literature in those years as nothing else can. For that literature of nationhood, beginning with

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the documentation of America in the depression and reaching a thunderous climax in an effort to seek out the American tradition, is largely the story of the American people as they came to understand it for themselves in a period of unprecedented crisis. It is the story of that now innocent, now calculating, now purely rhetorical, but always significant experience in national self-discovery which had its origin in the same obsession with society that led to the social novels of the period, but went on to create original or to reclaim traditional forms in a passionate effort to make a living record of contemporary American experience. It is the story of a vast new literature in itself, some of it fanatical or callow, some of it not writing at all, much of it laboriously solid and curious and humble, whose subject was the American scene and whose drive always was the need, born of the depression and the international crisis, to chart America and to possess it. It is the story of a literature of collective self-consciousness, a people's and a nation's biography; a story of physical and human geography, composed under pressure, often testifying only to the immediacy of that pressure, yet for all its occasional opportunism or naïveté, never without some fundamental joy in the study of America and the pride taken in its aroused self-comprehension.

Whatever form this literature took—the WPA guides to the states and roads; the reaction against the skepticism and now legendary “frivolity” of the twenties; the half-sentimental, half-commercial new folklore that manufactured or inflated comic demigods out of the reclaimed past; the endless documentation of the dispossessed in American life—it testified to so extraordinary a national self-scrutiny, signified so widespread and insistent a need, that all other considerations of it seem secondary. As if it marked a release of energies more thwarted in the past than anyone had suspected, a release of powers of affirmation crying for expression, whole divisions of writers now fell upon the face of America with a devotion that was baffled rather than shrill, and an insistence to know and to love what it knew that seemed unprecedented. Never before did a nation seem so hungry for news of itself, and not since those early years of the nineteenth century when the American had been the world's eighth wonder to European observers did America—if only the very texture of the country—seem so magnetic a subject in it-

self to so many different minds. The question now was no longer posed from afar—"What is an American?" Here the intelligence was native, as the subject was its very self, and by that very token a moving and always astonishing hunger for self-knowledge, since it seemed to express a profoundly innocent unanimity of spirit.

On the eve of this new nationalism, in 1932, Albert Jay Nock published a sardonic paper, "Return of the Patriots," in which he foretold that the "license of indiscriminate negation" during the twenties would be followed by a "license of indiscriminate affirmation" in the thirties. He saw ahead a literature of mechanical patriotism modeled upon the worst of the old—"it will be turgid, superficial, unintelligent, truculent." Yet though the spirit of the new nationalism did result in unprecedented affirmation, it was not at all what anyone in 1932 could have expected, for at its center lay a devotion to the heroic example, a need to question contemporary failure and demoralization, that had its roots in the same impulse which drove so many writers to report on the country all through the thirties. Obviously, of course, much of this writing represented the reflex patriotism and hungry traditionalism of a culture fighting for its life as it moved into war. Obviously, too, Hitler made nationalists out of many American writers almost as easily as Mencken had once made them scornful of the most commonplace national allegiance. The nationalist trend was marked here and there by a sentimentality that found its appropriate expression in the historical romance, and a certain comfortable smugness that showed in even ambitious histories and biographies and documentary studies. In a period when Hollywood found it so necessary to take a flyer on the *Spirit of '76*, a period when too many people thought they were writing history when they were only searching their attics, a period in which wistful souls who had in the twenties revenged themselves on their fathers now sought only the solid comfort of their grandfathers, the need to reclaim the past made for a certain complacency and swooning antiquarianism.

Often exploited, this new nationalism was, however, something profoundly more than a fashion, and to understand the spirit in which so many writers turned to recover America and to understand it is to appreciate how compelling was the drive toward na-

tional inventory which began by reporting the ravages of the depression and ended by reporting on the national inheritance. In his sequel to *The Flowering of New England*, a prime example of this new nationalism, Van Wyck Brooks rejoiced that "the golden-rod rises again in its season, and the folk-poem recovers its meaning, when the heart of a nation, grown old, returns to its youth." But as Brooks's own passionate attacks on certain modern "misleaders" later proved, his kind of devotion to the past was reminiscent with a purpose beyond reminiscence. For whatever the elegiac piety of this new traditionalism, its longing for the past was curiously in agreement with what André Malraux had meant when he said that a cultural inheritance does not consist in works which men must respect, but in works which help them to live. Nothing proves how well the leaders of the new nationalism believed that as the fury with which writers like Brooks and Archibald MacLeish, Howard Mumford Jones and Lewis Mumford, now began to excoriate so much of the modernism that had flowered between two world wars. Theirs was the rhetoric of haste, but in their own minds their haste was that of the demiurge; and the most significant aspect of the new traditionalism, whatever its inevitable narrowness or bigotry, was always its insistence upon reclaiming the past for the strengthening of the present.

So far from being merely a blind and parochial nationalism, this experience in national self-discovery was largely shaped by the sudden emergence of America as the repository of Western culture in a world overrun by Fascism. America may have been cut off from Europe after 1933, but the migration of so many European intellectuals to America meant, as John Peale Bishop said, that the European past was now confided to us, since we alone could "prolong it into the future." This was a profound influence on the reawakening to America's own tradition, since it meant a study of the national past conducted in the light of the European example in America, in the light of a new—if frantically enforced—sense of world responsibility. In an America which had either received or enrolled among its own so many of Europe's finest spirits from Thomas Mann to Jacques Maritain, from Albert Einstein to Sigrid Undset, the pride of helping to breed a new cosmopolitan culture gave a healthy stimulus to the searching of our own culture. To

believe, as one German émigré wrote so wistfully, that "in America the word still has real value; in Europe it is only make-believe," was to give an unprecedented importance to the consciousness of the word in America and an appropriate dignity.

For better or worse this new nationalism was a pervasive force, a new historic consciousness that gave new meaning to contemporary experience and thought, and to appreciate that is to see something in the experience of the times that we are perhaps not now fully prepared to understand. For here, in the revealing—especially revealing because it was so often mechanical—effort of so many American writers to seek out the reality of America in a time of crisis, is an authentic and curiously unconscious characterization of a tragic period. Here, in the vast granary of facts on life in America put away by the WPA writers, the documentary reporters, the folklorists preparing an American mythology, the explorers who went hunting through darkest America with notebook and camera, the new army of biographers and historians—here, stocked away like a reserve against bad times, is the raw stuff of that contemporary mass record which so many imaginative spirits tried to depict and failed to master. What we study here is all too often only a sub-literature, perhaps only a preparation for literature—evidence of a nostalgia too easily content with the trappings of sentimental autobiography and romance; evidence of a need to retreat into the solid comfort of descriptive facts, of a social awareness that found its appropriate expression in photographic details and sociological captions. Yet in that signal literature of empiricism which embodies the failure of so many to discriminate between the pen and the camera, between the need for the past and the comforting surface of that past, is the record of what most deeply interested the contemporary imagination.

Here, in this body of writing, is evidence of how deeply felt was the urge born of the crisis to recover America *as an idea*—and perhaps only thus to build a better society in the shell of the old; only thus to prepare a literature worthy of it. Out of the decade of unrelieved crisis and failure, of fumbling recovery and tension and war; out of the panic and extremism of so many of its finest talents; out of the desire to assess what could be known and to establish a

needed security in the American inheritance, came the realization of how little, for all its now world-famous triumphs, American writing had served the people and how little it had come to grips with the subject that lay closest at hand—the country itself.



There is a profound significance in the fact that this need to search out the land, to compile records, to explain America to itself, found its most abundant expression in a literature of formal social exploration and descriptive journalism. The novel, as Allen Tate said just a little contemptuously, may be an impure literary form because it is so much like history; but in a period when society is changing too rapidly and too violently for literature even to command the necessary detachment for imaginative truth, the serious novel itself will suffer in its effort to dominate what is not yet really known. In times of crisis people prefer to take their history straight, and on the run; and the documentary journalist who writes it on the run will give them history in terms which they are prepared to understand. If we ask why so many documentary journalists did more with their material than the social novelists who seemed to be working with the same material, the fact seems incapable that because of the very nature of the crisis and the explosive strains it imposed, too many contemporary imaginations were simply not equal to it. Nothing proves that so well, perhaps, as the readiness of so many novelists today to desert the novel altogether, or the palpable fact that so many writers enjoyed a greater certainty and ease when they no longer felt it necessary to impose an imaginative unity upon their work.

For what emerges so unmistakably from the enormous descriptive and historical literature of our day is how unready so many writers have been to seek its imaginative truth, how lacking they have been in the requisite confidence or detachment to dominate as artists what they suffer as citizens seeking to survive. Why is it, as so many have felt, that a job of straight left-wing reporting like Ruth McKenny's study of the rubber workers in Akron, *Industrial Valley*, is so much better a study (so much better a proletarian novel, as Malcolm Cowley said) than most proletarian novelists achieved? Why is it that

so sensitive and scrupulous a work of reporting the depression scene as George Leighton's *Five Cities* is so much richer and more authentic than most novels of the period? Why is it that in a period of unprecedented literary interest in the South, a period when the sharecropper haunted the imagination, the most moving and illuminating testimony of life in the South came from a WPA record of case histories, *These Are Our Lives*? Why is it that so much of the literature of the thirties and early forties must seem in retrospect a literature of Fact—one of those periods in which, despite the emergence of so many brilliant individual sensibilities, the chief effort of many writers seemed bent only on reporting, reporting; on running not too far behind the phenomena of the times?

The decline of the novel all through the period, a moral and physical decline, tells its own story in this respect. In so curious and difficult a revolutionary period as our own, so peculiarly hazardous a period, no one needs to be told how difficult it is for the imaginative spirit to command a necessary poise. Yet while the preponderance of descriptive nonfiction can be attributed partly to those who can appreciate reality only in terms of public events, there is an advantage the typical social reporter of the period enjoyed that explains why, as it happens, he often did succeed brilliantly within his sphere. For there is a sense in which the reality of our time *has* been composed of public events—a series of shattering shocks and tremors that has pounded away mercilessly at the mind. In such a period, marked by so pervasive and unexampled a sense of insecurity, the social reporter did not have to affect certainty; he was only a spectator of the passing show, a taker of notes. And because of the very nature of those repeated shocks, the moral and intellectual climate of the time seemed to call for nothing more than so passive (at most passively indignant) and even sardonic a spirit as the documentary literature of the thirties provided.

Like the effect Henry James sought in *The Princess Casamassima*, the reporting mind that opened the way for this new nationalism might be described as one "of our not knowing, of society's not knowing, but only guessing and suspecting and trying to ignore what goes on irreconcilably, subversively, beneath the vast smug surface." The surface was now anything but smug and, far from trying to ignore what went on beneath it, the world of contemporary opinion

was haunted by its subterranean revolution. Yet that conviction of "our not knowing, of society's not knowing," was the field in which the documentary reporter and traveler now operated with ease and a certain serene humility that in that "not knowing" lay his usefulness as an observer and his ability to satisfy his readers on the same level.

We don't know
We aren't sure
We wonder
We're asking

In that "not knowing, of society's not knowing," indeed, was the test of his participation in the great contemporary experience, for society, which knew only that it did not know, would respond to and believe in only those writers who pressed it on—not too hard, certainly—to grasp the first facts about itself.

The two great associations of this literature of social description—the New Deal and the camera—help to illuminate its character in this respect. For rather like the New Deal itself, which opened so many new fields of investigation for this documentary school and even subsidized the WPA contributions to it, this new literature symbolized the effort of the inquiring mind, living in a period when the New Deal represented all the manifold adjustments of crisis government, to approach the problem of democratic survival. And just as the New Deal was weakest in philosophy, most transparently lacking in some centrality of direction and belief, so this documentary literature of the New Deal era represents a profound yet significantly indirect process of education. It was, indeed, a literature just as profound as the New Deal, no more and no less; a plastic literature, with all America for its subject, that became, as Dixon Wecter said of President Roosevelt, "a rare seismograph for all the social tremors of his time"; a crisis literature moving by an explosion of quick yet uncertain starts within the framework of the established order; a literature in which the sense of movement and of perpetual search was always more dynamic than any conception of the ends toward which it moved.

Franklin Roosevelt, considered as one national leader among others, may seem distinctive enough, since he was the leader of a

mass movement greater than any Jackson, Lincoln, T. R., or Wilson led. But what is significant here—it may yet seem a fact of the first importance to future students of New Deal America—is not the power or resourcefulness of his leadership, but the extent to which his famous malleability, his “statesmanship as adjustment,” was the focus of the great national experience under the New Deal. Everyone was learning in the thirties (well, nearly everyone), learning and groping at a time when the learning process had become a major experience in itself; and H. G. Wells’s description of Roosevelt—“a ganglion for reception, expression, transmission, combination, and realization”—expresses one of the great truths of a time that found its appropriate expression in a literature of responsive social description. As Max Lerner said, the importance of Roosevelt’s own responsiveness to public opinion is that he had to educate not only himself, but the whole country, to the forces remaking the world. But in a larger sense Roosevelt was responsive to more than “public opinion.” How else are we to understand the world of the thirties that raised him to world leadership, raised him from the amiable but seemingly not too profound land-squire of Hyde Park, the pedestrian Admiralty law specialist, the former vice-president of the Fidelity Deposit Company, the complaisant Governor of New York?

What the documentary literature provided, then, was a register of the learning process, an example of a new social consciousness in America whose greatest distinction was the very fact of that consciousness in itself, the sense of a grim and steady awareness rather than of great comprehension. In this respect none of the devices the documentary and travel reporters used is so significant as their reliance upon the camera. Ever since the daguerreotype had come into American life, writers had been affected by the photographic standard, but now they became curiously abject before it. Nothing in this new literature, indeed, stands out so clearly as its attempt to use and even to imitate the camera. In a whole succession of books—Erskine Caldwell’s and Margaret Bourke-White’s *You Have Seen Their Faces* and *Say, Is This the USA*; Dorothea Lange’s and Paul S. Taylor’s *An American Exodus*; Archibald MacLeish’s *Land of the Free* (pictures by courtesy of the Farm Security Administration); James Agee’s and Walker Evans’s *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, the new genre developed by Pare Lorentz in *The*

River, and the rest—the words and pictures were not only mutually indispensable, a kind of commentary upon each other, but curiously interchangeable. In a postscript to his *Land of the Free*, Archibald MacLeish wrote:

[It] is the opposite of a book of poems illustrated by photographs. It is a book of photographs illustrated by a poem. . . . The book is the result of an attempt to give these photographs an accompaniment of words. . . . The original purpose had been to write some sort of text to which these photographs might serve as commentary. But so great was the power and the stubborn inward livingness of these vivid American documents that the result was a reversal of that plan.

So Dorothea Lange and Paul S. Taylor wrote of their *An American Exodus: A Record of Human Erosion* that it was neither a book of photographs nor an illustrated book, in the traditional sense. "Its particular form is the result of our use of techniques in proportions and relations designed to convey understanding easily, clearly, and vividly. . . . Upon a tripod of photographs, captions, and text we rest themes evolved out of long observations in the field." And even the unillustrated books of social "reportage," like Edmund Wilson's *The American Jitters* and *Travels in Two Democracies*, James Rorty's *Where Life is Better*, Nathan Asch's *The Road: In Search of America*, Louis Adamic's *My America*, showed that their authors were always seeking to catch reality on the run, as it were; to identify the object seen by etching it sharply on the mind; to give it a kind of wry objective irony or bitterness. Indeed, the technical and psychological fascination of the camera may be considered even to have given a new character to contemporary prose, a transformation which can be appreciated only in terms of its moral example, since it was the camera's essential passiveness that made for its technical influence over so many writers.

As a few great Americans have proved so well, the camera can be an extraordinary medium for the sensitive imagination; but in the crisis-begotten literature of the documentary school it served to give the general appearance of what Lincoln Kirstein described as the function of the candid camera in our time, to make up "in quantitative shock what it lacks in real testimony. . . . Its only inherent characteristic is the accidental shock that obliterates the essential nature of the event it pretends to discover." The photographs in most

of the documentary books were anything but candid-camera shots, of course. Few artists today have created anything so rich and meaningful as the photographs Walker Evans contributed to *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* and his own volume of *American Photographs*, and the photographs in the documentary books by photographers like Ben Shahn, Dorothea Lange, Carl Mydans, and others were often of extraordinary merit. But the extent to which the camera as an idea affected documentary and travel reporters and served them as a prime symbol of a certain enforced simplicity and passivity of mind, is still little appreciated.

Margaret Bourke-White put it with wonderful simplicity when she said: "Whatever facts a person writes have to be colored by his prejudice and bias. With a camera, the shutter opens and closes and the only rays that come in to be registered come directly from the object in front of you." It follows from all that has been said of the documentary reporters that the appeal of the camera was not to their superficiality but to their spiritual fatigue, as it were; to their "not knowing . . . society's not knowing." The "keen historic spasm of the shutter," as James Agee called it, served not only "to portray America," but also to answer subtly to the writer's conscious or unconscious unwillingness or inability to go beyond his material. As Agee put it in that documentary book written to end all documentary books, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*,¹ with the camera "everything is to be discerned, for him who can discern it, and centrally and simply, without either dissection into science, or digestion into art . . . all of consciousness is shifted from the imagined, the revisive, to the effort to perceive simply the cruel radiance of what is."

In the vast flood of social reports there were naturally a good many books which merely exploited the camera technique on its lowest level, books as superficial as the average weekly picture magazine or as loud as a tabloid headline. But while there were necessarily

¹ Agee's text has a special importance not merely because it is an unusually sensitive document and a work of great moral intensity, but particularly because it represents a revolt against the automatism of the documentary school. It was begun as a typical documentary assignment and ended by being an attack on the facile mechanics and passivity of most documentary assignments. Agee went so far in his revulsion, in fact, that his book even took on the deep personal suffering of Faulkner's novels.

a good many books of this order, books which merely pandered to public excitement, the real significance of the literary use of the camera is that many serious writers were so affected by its use—or symbolism—that they seemed interested only in photographing the country on the run, in giving to the accumulated weight of a thousand different details and impressions of the national texture the solid testimony of their “education.” In this respect the camera served to give documentary prose a hard, wry, noncommittal character—a character entirely appropriate to its obsession with the surface drama of the times, its stabbed and stab-like consciousness, its professed contempt for “illusion.” What the fascination of the camera represented, in a word, was a kind of sick pride in its fiercely objective “realism.” The camera did not fake or gloss over; it told “the truth of the times”; it was at once so aggressive and uncertain that it highlighted an awakened, ironic, militant, yet fundamentally baffled self-consciousness. Most important, the camera reproduced endless *fractions* of reality. In itself so significant a medium of tension, it fastened upon the atmosphere of tension. And if the accumulation of visual scenes seemed only a collection of “mutually repellent particles,” as Emerson said of his sentences, was not *that* discontinuity, that havoc of pictorial sensations, just the truth of what the documentary mind saw before it in the thirties?

Reveling in a land so rich in descriptive facts, content with a kind of fever brilliance or anger or wit in the presence of so stupendous and humiliating a disorder as the depression scene provided, the documentary-travel reporter thus had his happiness. America lay all before him, his to choose; and how much there was to see and how little to annotate! The sharecropper, for example, fascinated the writer out to see the country, since he embodied so visual a conception of all that had to be recognized and redeemed in America. He provided an occasion for catharsis; he was a special contemporary phenomenon that fixed the general sense of outrage and quickened the sensibility of fellowship. Yet one had only to look at him (Margaret Bourke-White having taken his picture, imprisoning his agony for all history to gape at) to know how little there was to say. One had only to look at his South to believe that what one saw was the American drama of this day and age, all the

pressures of the time brought together at the point of maximum curiosity and rage. Yet having looked, what was there to say that the Farm Security Administration did not have down in its files, the sociologist in his statistics? Here was America, all of it undoubtedly America—but America in a gallery of photographs, an echo of the people's talk, a storehouse of vivid single impressions.

Here was America—the cars on the unending white ribbon of road; the workers in the mills; the faces of farmers' wives and their children in the roadside camp, a thousand miles from nowhere; the tenant farmer's wife with her child sitting on the steps of the old plantation mansion, where the columns were gray and crumbling with age. Here was the child in the grimy bed, the Okies crossing the desert in their jalopy, the pallor of August in the Dust Bowl, the Baptist service in the old Negro church. Here was the greatest creative irony the reportorial mind of the thirties could establish—a picture of Negro farmers wandering on the road, eating their bread under a billboard poster furnished by the National Association of Manufacturers—"America Enjoys the Highest Standard of Living in the World." Here was the migrant family sleeping on sacks in the roadside grass, above them the railroad legend "Travel While You Sleep." Here was the Negro sitting in the fields near Memphis (more men than jobs at the Bridgehead labor market), saying: "They come off the plantations 'cause they ain't got nothin' to do. . . . They come to town and they *still* got nothin' to do." Here was the treeless landscape in southwestern Oklahoma, a country strewn with deserted and crumbling houses, the farmers driven off by the tractors, a picture of land where the tractors now kneaded the earth right "to the very door of the houses of those whom they replace."

Here, indeed, was an America that could only be quoted and photographed, described in pictures or in words that sought to be pictures. "America today is the scene of a mighty drama," Erskine Caldwell wrote in *Say, Is This the USA*, "the like of which we have never before experienced." There was no audience; everyone was on the stage playing his part. And if there were doubts as to what the play meant, "in the meantime, there is action on top of action, there is action galore. . . . All these people, all this abundance, all

these things, is this America we live in; but none of us knows what to do about it. This is us, this is what we have; but nobody knows what to do next." Like Thomas Wolfe, who was reduced to making lists of all those things and scenes in the world he tried vainly to bind together, the documentary reporter, precisely because he was unable or unwilling to bind anything together, was driven to make lists of single impressions, lists of objects and names, above all lists of all those people scattered in the lava flow of the thirties who had stories to tell. America was everywhere, in everything; America was people everywhere; people on farms and on relief; people on the road; farmers in town standing before store windows; the girl on the bus who was going from town to town looking for work; the anonymous sharecropper who told his woes and said sharply, "These things are a pressin' on us in the state of Mississippi"; the migrant farmer in California who said of Oklahoma: "No, I didn't *sell* out back there. I *give* out"; the Negro boy Erskine Caldwell met who built coffins underground because he had served three years on a chain gang in Georgia for owing a white man \$11, and had said he would let daylight burn itself out—he would never look at it—before he would get caught in such a jam again.

Yes, America lay all before the documentary reporter, his to choose; and what did it matter if the America he saw was often only the America he came prepared to see? He made up his pattern, and the country—so rich in patterns for different minds—always lived up to it. Sherwood Anderson, who early in the thirties published a book appropriately entitled *Puzzled America*, had one pattern. Theodore Dreiser, who published another on *Tragic America*, had his pattern, the Dreiser pattern, always tragic. In *The "Argonauts,"* a book by five leftist college students who went out to see the country "for themselves"—the rootlessness of young people without jobs had long since made a virtue out of necessity—one saw an America that consisted rather exclusively of CIO organizers, chain gangs, sharecroppers, ugly native Fascists, leftist movie stars. In Edmund Wilson's early book of this type—*The American Jitters*, published in the worst year of the depression—all the savagery and inchoate bitterness of 1932 went into coruscating snapshots of police fighting hunger marchers, Tammany Hall, the Fish Committee in-

vestigating the Red Menace, suicides in Brooklyn, and the unhappy depositors of the Bank of United States. In his *Travels in Two Democracies* all the nervous brilliance so latent in the travelogue report went into a portrait of extraordinary density, yet one in which everything in America from Hull House to Radio City looked as if it had been photographed on Inauguration Day, 1933, with all the banks closed and the country running a high fever.

From Portland to Portland, from Detroit to the Gulf, from New York to Hollywood, there were patterns for all. In Louis Adamic's *My America*, a sprawling book of impressions by a writer whose immigrant past had given him an outsider's curiosity and a vibrant democratic fraternalism, America appeared as a strange but promising land that was essentially "a process—long and endless." Nathan Asch's highly introspective *The Road* bore no relation to the cautious unpanicky middle-class Indiana of the Lynds' *Middletown in Transition*; Benjamin Appel's studiously leftist *The People Talk* was not the same America that Rollo Brown found in *I Travel by Train*; but it was all America nevertheless. In *Where Life Is Better: An Unsentimental American Journey* (the main title was ironic), James Rorty described an America built on fear and ignorance and hatred, an America "building the stockades of fascism with which to protect what was left of its grandiose acquisitive dream." He saw an America, all retching ugliness and class conflict, that moved him to cry in despair: "What profound failure of American life did this drift of human atoms signify and embody, and to what would it lead? . . . The people had not possessed the landscape, nor had the landscape possessed them. The balance was indeed broken." Yet though what he saw seemed only "some profound profanation of the human spirit," in the end he was moved to confess that he did not know what America was. "I suspect that no one knows. Certainly I am in no position to make any categorical pronouncement."

No. No one knew. The girl in the bus, groping her way in the darkness from job to job; the boy in the road waiting for a lift; the salesman in the store, his baffled eyes belying his professional smile; the hotel clerk who said of the titled refugees from Fascism: "I used to think America would always stay the same, but now with all

kinds of people coming here it's bound to change." What were they trying to say that only all America could say for them? Did they know? Did anyone know, when the pictures said so much, when one's whole experience on the road was a succession of pictures on the mind?

3

Yet something always remained: the shadow of the past on the land the Okies had left behind; the land itself that lay everywhere ready to be discovered and reclaimed; the framework of a whole American civilization, richer and more curious than many in the depression generation knew, greater than any crisis, waiting and begging to be known. The paradox of the crisis, as Lewis Mumford said, was that in a period of abnormal stress Americans began for the first time to learn many of the things that should have been normal to them as a people. Playgrounds and schools were built that prosperity could not afford; a new folk art and regionalism, and with it a reawakening to the forgotten cultural resources of the country, were developed out of the make-work programs of the WPA; only when writers had gone on relief was America charted in the great New Deal Baedeker of the states and roads; searching only for facts, a whole army of social reporters and travelers recovered an American sense of history and began to chant the rich diversity and beauty of the country as if America had never been really known before. Reporters of crisis, the documentary and travel writers now stumbled almost unwittingly into history; working and living on the surface of contemporary migration and poverty and unrest, they pieced together the broad outlines of a national civilization.

So Pare Lorentz, preparing his documentary film on floods and erosion in the Mississippi Valley, suddenly caught the image of the river, the spinal cord of the nation, in a chanting litany of American river names, caught it in a burst of celebrant American splendor unparalleled since Whitman. Here was the national center, as Sherman had caught the vision from it of a central union so long before at Vicksburg—here, in the gallery portrait of migration and erosion, the central and symbolic agony of the times. Yet how

strange that anything so seemingly "descriptive" could be so beautiful

Down the Judith, the Grand, the Osage, and the Platte,
The Rock, the Salt, the Black and Minnesota,
Down the Monongahela, the Allegheny Kanawha and
Muskingum,

The Miami, the Wabash, the Licking and the Green . . .
("Monongahela," Whitman had said admiringly; "it rolls like venison
off the tongue.")

So the WPA state guides, seemingly only a makeshift, a stratagem of administrative relief policy to tide a few thousand people along and keep them working, a business of assigning individuals of assorted skills and interests to map the country, mile by mile, resulted in an extraordinary contemporary epic. Out of the need to find something to say about every community and the country around it, out of the vast storehouse of facts behind the guides—geological, geographic, meteorological, ethnological, historical, political, sociological, economic—there emerged an America unexampled in density and regional diversity. Were the state guides, as some felt, only a project for research workers rather than for writers? Perhaps; but the literary merit of some of them was greater than most people have appreciated, and their coverage of the country anything but mechanical. More than any other literary form in the thirties, the WPA writers' project, by illustrating how much so many collective skills could do to uncover the collective history of the country, set the tone of the period. As the first shock and panic of the depression passed, and the social reporters settled down to cover the country with a growing eagerness and interest in the epic unfolding out of their investigations, the WPA guides became something more than a super-Baedeker (America had been too much for the Baedeker industry itself, which had quit after one guide): it became a repository as well as a symbol of the reawakened American sense of its own history.

The facts in the guides were only the underpinning of history, but as they began to pour out of the presses, accompanied by the research notes of the Survey of Federal Archives, the Historical Records Survey, the historical notes of the students collecting American folk songs for the Music Project, they had an extraordinary

charm in themselves, and a good many surprises to offer. This, like so much in the descriptive and historical literature of the thirties, was perhaps only the raw stuff of history, America put away into a long succession of files, a formal uninterpreted table of statistics on a civilization. But as Robert Cantwell pointed out, the guides went so far and so deep into every corner of the American land that they uncovered an America that nothing in the academic histories had ever prepared one for, and very little in imaginative writing. Road by road, town by town, down under the alluvia of the industrial culture of the twentieth century, lay an America that belied many of the traditional legends about itself. For here, under the rich surface deposits of the factory and city world, lay the forgotten stories of all those who had failed rather than succeeded in the past, all those who had not risen on the steps of the American dream from work bench to Wall Street, but had built a town where the railroad would never pass, gambled on coal deposits where there was no coal, risked their careers for oil where there was no oil: all the small-town financiers who guessed wrong, all those who groped toward riches that never came. And here, too, was the humorous, the creepy, the eccentric side of the American character: the secret rooms and strange furtive religions; the forgotten enthusiasms and heresies and cults; the relics of fashion and tumbling mansions that had always been someone's folly; the grandiose projects, like the ersatz Venice of so many seaside realtors' dreams in the twenties. Here, as Cantwell said in his essay on the America revealed in the state guides, was a chronicle not of the traditional sobriety and industry and down-to-earth business wit of the American race, but rather of a childlike, fanciful, impulsive, and absent-minded people—"a terrible and yet engaging corrective to the success stories that dominate our literature."

But there was something more than a history of secret failure to be uncovered. Important as the WPA guides were in themselves, they pointed even more significantly to a reawakened interest in the whole of the American past, a need to give the whole spirit of social inventory in New Deal America a basic foundation in the reclaimed American inheritance. Now, as the tide of Fascism mounted higher and higher in Europe, and it looked as if Americans had been thrown back on their own resources as never before, the whole

emphasis of the early depression literature on national self-scrutiny became a thundering flood of national consciousness and self-celebration. Suddenly, as if it marked a necessary expiation of too rapid and embittered a disillusionment in the past, American writing became a swelling chorus of national affirmation and praise. Suddenly all the debunkers of the past, who had long since been on relief, became the special objects of revulsion and contempt. Suddenly all the despised catchwords of the democratic rhetoric took on a brilliant radiance in a Hitler world; in the emotional discovery of America the country once more became, as Jefferson had long ago foreseen, "this government: the world's best hope."

No longer could one even believe, as Archibald MacLeish had written in *Land of the Free*, that

We wonder whether the dream of American liberty
Was two hundred years of pine and hardwood
And three generations of the grass

And the generations are up: the years over

We don't know.

No, the dream of American liberty was here; it was now. Americans, MacLeish now let himself go in *The American Cause*, were people "who had the luck to be born on this continent where the heat was hotter and the cold was colder and the sun was brighter and the nights were blacker and the distances were farther and the faces were nearer and the rain was more like rain and the mornings were more like mornings than anywhere else on earth—sooner or sweeter and lovelier over unused hills." "O my America—my new-found-land . . . / How blest am I in this discovering thee!" Chanting America, loving it, celebrating it, there was suddenly a whole world of marvels on the continent to possess—a world of rivers and scenes, of folklore and regional culture, of a heroic tradition to reclaim and of forgotten heroes to follow. America was here, now, a continent to be surveyed as Lincoln had surveyed the prairie sod where a civilization would follow, an inheritance to rejoice in and to find strength in. America was, indeed, again what Whitman had seen in the first preface to his great poem:

The Americans of all nations at any time upon the earth, have probably the fullest poetical nature. The United States themselves

are essentially the greatest poem. In the history of the earth hitherto, the largest and most stirring appear tame and orderly to their ampler largeness and stir. Here at last is something in the doings of man that corresponds with the broadcast doings of the day and night. Here is action untied from strings, necessarily blind to particulars and details, magnificently moving in masses.

After the hard-cruised social novels, the crusading polemics, and the exacerbated social reportage of the thirties, the new nationalism now flowered in a literature of solid and affectionate history and biography. As the great affirmative testaments of this new spirit began to appear in endless anthologies of "the democratic spirit," in Sandburg's Lincoln and Carl Van Doren's Benjamin Franklin, in the lyrical history of the New England nineteenth-century mind produced by Van Wyck Brooks, in the tremendous literature that fought the Civil War over as if it had never been fought before, in hundreds of historical novels, in whole tons of folklore material, the hunger for the past—with all it signified of a yearning for stability in the American tradition—told a story greater and more moving in itself than any of the capacious new biographies and histories and novels could suggest. This was a crisis-begotten nationalism, yes; a fever glow of patriotism, quick to rise and perhaps quick to sicken; an army of open-mouthed tourists who seemed to regard America as one vast national park, full of interesting boulders, quaint bits of Indian folklore, and meteorological wonders. Perhaps. Here, as one liked, was either the ironic epilogue to half a century of critical modernism in America or the happy emergence of a real maturity and profound national allegiance among American writers. Yet whatever its virtues or crudities, historical services or pieties, how great a story it did tell in itself!

"In times of change and danger when there is a quicksand of fear under men's reasoning," John Dos Passos now wrote in his tribute to the democratic tradition, *The Ground We Stand On*, "a sense of continuity with generations gone before can stretch like a lifeline across the scary present." In that contemporary sense of danger and the historical sense it invoked lay the moving force of the new nationalism. There had been a flood of historical novels in the eighteen-nineties, but that had been a purely middle-class romanticism, a desire for sentiment and romance that testified not to an

interest in history but to a desire to invest the solidity of the rich self-conscious prosperity of the industrial epoch with the trappings of an adventurous and glorious past. So in the great era of American historical writing represented by Prescott and Parkman, Bancroft and Motley, the pride in the independence and stability of the young republic had led men to look back with a fresh and confident pleasure on its early struggles and on the history of the American continent, cradle of a great civilization. But the historical writing that became so preponderant in the thirties was not so much a self-conscious reading of the past as a supplication to it. All history is self-conscious; all true history, as Croce said, is "contemporary history." But what distinguishes the historical writing of the thirties in most of its forms is its curious solidity, its attempt not to "escape" into the past but to pack the whole of the past into the present. What distinguishes it is a curious literalness, a veneration of the past at once grim and uncritical, a desire actually to use the past as if it had never been used before.

Uncritical and unsentimental. Inevitably, some of this historical literature was sentimental, as a good deal of Van Wyck Brooks's New England history, for example, was a sentimental transcription of Concord sights and sounds. Yet the most illuminating quality of this new writing was precisely its objectivity, since its great aim was not to prettify the past but to recover it bodily, as it were; to take possession of it and to enjoy it on the fullest possible scale. The cry now, as in the social journalism of the period, was for facts, facts; but facts on how men *in the past* had lived, on how they had withstood the pressure of their times, on how they had survived. Even the many historical novels, despite their own tradition of romanticism, despite the inevitable confectionery of the sword-and-cape romance, were distinguished by their general tone of sober matter-of-fact realism. In fact, so many of these new historical novels seemed to be written in the best tradition of American scholarship, replete with historical apparatus and bibliographies, that they testified as nothing else could to the demand of the period for solidly grounded and tirelessly accumulated monuments of historical fact. So the new histories and biographies, all so palpably built out of enormous labor and affection, all so objective

and massive and even a little pious, revealed the taste for scrupulous and inclusive portraiture of the past.

Nowhere in the enormous descriptive literature of the thirties did this new spirit reveal itself so vividly as in biography, where it had its triumph. Carl Sandburg spoke not only for his fellow craftsmen in the field, but also for a whole generation, when he wrote bitterly of the debunkers that they had written "books where men of shallow wisdom and showman's tricks had subverted and falsified so as to fool young people regarding events and characters where the reality is better than the myth." Odell Shepard, another leading biographer of the period, wrote in reviewing a new, solid, and definitive life of Timothy Dwight (so many of the biographies were now "solid and definitive"):

During recent years and months . . . we have begun to realize that there was something quite indispensable in those virtues that once seemed parochial and outworn. We are now learning once more to respect those orthodoxies and fidelities which are the products not of ease but of danger. Now and then we look back a little wistfully at the heroes of our national past, wishing that the attitude of hero-worship had not been quite so violently assailed in the presence of those who are now called upon to be themselves heroic. What this amounts to is that our pose of ultra-sophistication, a familiar trait of adolescence, is no longer fashionable. We are now making rapid progress toward the simplicity of really mature minds.

What this "simplicity" meant stood clearly revealed in the foreword that Henry Steele Commager wrote to his glowing biography of Theodore Parker:

Where [Parker] was vain I have not sought to rebuke his vanity, where he was inconsistent I have not thought it necessary to remark his inconsistency, where he was ungenerous I have not taken him to task, where he was violent I have not tried to abate his violence, where he was mistaken I have not attempted to set him right.

Shades of Joseph Wood Krutch's brilliant psychoanalytical dissection of Poe, of W. E. Woodward's *Meet General Grant*, of Van Wyck Brooks's *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*! The reaction had set in, and with Lytton Strachey departed forever, along with all those easy and deliciously scornful epigrams that had once provoked an irreverent generation to laughter, the taste now was all for an objectivity that not merely fulfilled its function in scholarship but

became a search for the very "feel" of the past. It was this pressing need to recover as much of the past as possible, to steep oneself in it, that explains why the staggering detail of these books, with their rich and eagerly proffered accumulation of data, made them seem anything but pedestrian. The stress of biography was no longer on distinction of style, on a calculated evocation of atmosphere and character; given the facts, the biographer seemed to say, the story would tell itself, aided only by common sense, the necessary sympathy for one's subject (this was of the first importance), and a decent respect for the merit and dignity of the world to be described.

With the return of "fat, full, old-fashioned biography, rich in facts and lean in random speculation," the very literary character of modern American biography seemed to change, as indeed it did. But the reaction was not simply a return to the "life-and-letters" school of the Victorian tradition. Books like Carl Van Doren's *Franklin*, Douglas S. Freeman's *Lee*, Lloyd Lewis's *Sherman*, Allan Nevins's *Grover Cleveland and Rockefeller* and *Frémont* (among others), Marquis James's *Sam Houston and Andrew Jackson*, Carl Sandburg's *Lincoln*, Claude Bowers's *Jefferson*, were all scholarly books—biography was now nothing if it was not scholarly—but they were books to be read and enjoyed, books that had been written to restore their subjects—"in grand dimensions," as Carl Van Doren wrote of his *Franklin*—to the world. The "reality was better than the myth," and it had only to be described in all its incomparable fullness. And since there was so much to give back, the writers of these books generally adopted a loose-ranging, convenient bluntness of style that served to shovel the whole of the past into their books. The highest aspiration now was to be as humble and attentive as Boswell; no one ever thought to be as magnificently wrong as Dr. Johnson. A full-dress description of a Civil War battle, as in Douglas S. Freeman's *Lee* or Lloyd Lewis's *Sherman*, was now worth a hundred epigrams; a laborious recreation of the subject's background, solidly documented and affectionately written, as in George F. Whicher's notable *Emily Dickinson*, easily surpassed the most brilliant flights of character speculation. To live with Lincoln in Carl Sandburg's six volumes, face to face with the people he met, the things he saw and wrote, hearing again almost every one of the

thousand stories he told, was to know the supreme happiness of being alive again in the past.

The immense distinction of Sandburg's book made it the monument of the new biography, a peculiarly transparent example of a new historical consciousness. Built up through the years like a coral reef, loosely written and at times even slovenly—it was curious to note how the conscious, faintly sentimental lyricism of the early chapters in *The Prairie Years* soon broke into a businesslike trot under the flood of data in *The War Years*—the book revealed a studiously negative artistry. Under the pressure of that whole Civil War world to recreate, the very effort of Sandburg's imagination was subtly transformed into a supreme historical sensitiveness, a capacity for embracing the whole stupendous past. Where in *The Prairie Years* one could still see a certain self-conscious (and appealing) "poetizing" of the facts, with Sandburg, as it were, plotting the chronicle of Lincoln's growth, the measure of Lincoln now became the measure of that whole American civilization that would find its apotheosis in him. The past came rushing back in a torrent, all of it, seemingly; the story began to tell itself. Out of the recovery of a period in time, a period restored day by day, month after month, layer on layer, a mound heap of human stories, Lincoln arose before the reader like a massive shadow of the racked civilization he had held together, a stupendous aggregation of all those American traits that were to find so ambiguous and moving an expression in him. And this was the distinction of Sandburg's portrait: Lincoln did not live in himself, he lived because an epoch had to be pieced together slowly and laboriously to reclaim him; he lived because the very pang of democracy, rising out of so much struggle and aspiration, now resided in him. More than a symbol of a distinct American experience, he had become the propulsion of a great symphonic poem; more than a leader, the people's legend of him now seemed the greatest of all American works of art.

5

Slowly and hopefully, this new historical spirit was now edging its way into the unabashed recovery of an American mythology. The past was not always glorious, but no matter; its glory lay

in its being past. A golden haze now lay over "the age of confidence"—a term which Henry Seidel Canby used as the title of his memoir of life in the eighteen-nineties, but which could have been used with equal nostalgia and affection by most of the numerous biographers and historians, autobiographers and historical novelists, who now turned to describe scene after scene out of that past which lay beyond the stain of contemporary instability and terror. Remembering the nineties, Canby wrote of it as a time when "you belonged—and it was up to your own self to find out how and where. There has been no such certainty in American life since." *"In that last epoch of American stability of which I write . . ."* Any epoch which a man could remember as different from the present now seemed "the last epoch of American stability." A wave of remembrance had set in, and all the queer country grandfathers, all the joys of life with father, all the solid, folksy virtues came back—less out of a pride in their forbears, as Lewis Gannett suggested, than out of an inferiority complex. So even Harold E. Stearns, who had made a reputation for himself in the twenties by mobilizing contemporary intellectuals in the fashionable expatriate scorn for Babbitt America, now became a heated propagandist of the national virtues. So even H. L. Mencken, who had taken to writing his memoirs, now wrote with an almost touching sentimental pleasure of the great days, the good old days, that lay before. What times! What endless gaiety and confidence!

The past now lay everywhere ready to be reclaimed, waiting to be chanted and celebrated. The old ballads began to come back, all the dear familiar legends, all the fine rawboned heroes of the frontier epic—Davy Crockett and Paul Bunyan, Mike Fink and John Henry, Johnny Appleseed and Daniel Boone, and with them a host of new supermen and gargantuan jokers and work giants—Whiskey Jack, Johnny Inkslinger, Pecos Bill. "From a nation lean in folk annals and too short-lived to boast an heroic age," as one folklore specialist wrote, there had suddenly sprung a knavish, comic, blustering, yet proudly titanic race of superheroes. Often transparently synthetic heroes, they yet all testified to the fascination with the prodigal carelessness, the strong pride in the homemade myths of a lusty day, now felt by their uneasy urbanized descendants. From its first beginnings

American folklore had always been the tribute paid in reminiscence by a late generation to an earlier. So even Mike Fink, the Mississippi river god, was supposed to have cried when he was turned out to pasture in a world of canals and factories: "What's the use of improvements? Where's the fun, the frolicking, the fighting? Gone! All gone!" Now the impulse to collect folklore was more poignantly than ever a longing for a heroic tradition, and the stories so many students now begin to pick up were of fabricated giants (what did it matter that they were fabricated?) dreaming and fighting and loving like young gods in the visible Homeric heavens. All other mythical heroes, as Max Eastman said, were serious; ours had come too late to be serious, and that was their charm. They were not plaster casts in a pantheon of greatness; they were the embodiment of a jealous American aspiration, the recovered stuff of a forgotten American laughter. "They were born in laughter," as Eastman said; "they are consciously preposterous; they are cock-alorum demi-gods. That is the natively American thing—not that her primitive humor is exaggerative, but that her primitive exaggerations were humorous." And in their humorous strength lay what was wanted.

So the new literature of American folkways, of the river legends and regional cultures, while often shallow enough, was anything but museum-like. Often only too eager to claim a distinctive cultural tradition for every corner of the country, the many descriptive-historical books that now poured out of the presses testified to a need to tag and index and literally possess the country. Everything that lay at hand cried to be photographed and recorded and admired; everything that was past was now interesting and charming and radiantly alive: costumes and houses, manners and people, Benedict Arnold's first great services, cracker-barrel legends, all the stuff of a hundred forgotten political conflicts, *American* conflicts. Even the Loyalists of the Revolutionary period were restored to favor in Kenneth Roberts's slick *Oliver Wiswell*, and everyone sighed over their misfortunes and loved them in the same spirit that they now loved Tom Paine and Sam Adams. Even Ezra Pound, in one of the last cantos he wrote before he went to work for the Axis, paid his tribute to John Quincy Adams. And Daniel Webster, of whom Emerson and Whittier had had another opinion, now

appeared in Stephen Vincent Benét's charming story as a *big man*, a pillar of virtue, a gigantic folk hero, fit to rescue Yankee souls from the Devil and beat him easily at his own game. "No American citizen may be forced into the service of a foreign prince."

What all this was leading to, as the trend in biography had shown and the rage of the historical novel now proved, was a desire to enter bodily into the past, to make a great, comforting, yet authentic pageantry out of it. What did it matter that Kenneth Roberts described the Revolutionary patriots as a "rabble," or that Margaret Mitchell won the peace as if the North had never won the Civil War? All the lost causes now came back through the historical novel, that favorite home of the lost causes, and no one—least of all the millions of readers in the North and the West gulping up one Confederate romance after another—cared whether the South had lost at all. South or North, West or East, it all added up to everything the contemporary world was not, a kind of seamless web of heroic and exhilarating legend. What the historical novelists now sought was an image of the past made whole, an image of a world modern readers could enter into completely and possess in all its parts; and they generally found it on the basis of an imitative modern realism in the novel. For only a meticulous realism could now reproduce the past as it needed to be reproduced; photographed, as it were, in a succession of glowing scenes. The new historical novel, at once so conscientiously antiquarian and self-consciously contemporary, therefore had no need of the old romantic apparatus of the historical novel; it made a romance out of its recovery of the past. Too deeply interested in their own world to fool with the old conventional idealizations, too sophisticated to want anything less than an authentic transcription of how other people had really lived, the historical novelists were at the same time interested only in making the past come alive, in giving it a realistic quality that would illuminate, rather than deny, the riches of the past it tried to evoke.

It was in this same vein of historical portraiture and pageantry, significantly enough, that popular histories and anthologies of "the American spirit" now began to appear. Even so solidly respectable a historian as Allan Nevins launched an appeal, in *The Gateway to History*, for a more colorful history, a history richer in human

interest and literary skill. He paid tribute to the great American historians of the past who had thought of history as the creator and inspirer of nations, and recalled the spirit of Treitschke, who had resolved to revive the national spirit of the Germans by writing history. So even John Dos Passos, sketching the history of the Anglo-American tradition in *The Ground We Stand On*, was moved to a new and startling eloquence in his contemplation of Thomas Jefferson on his hill at Monticello, dreaming the promise of a "future that like a great convex mirror magnified every act and gesture of the men working their fields and building their farms in the tiny settlements along the Eastern seaboard." Describing the lives of Roger Williams and Sam Adams, Tom Paine and Jefferson, of Joel Barlow and Hugh Henry Brackenridge, Dos Passos seemed to recover so exhilarating a sense of pride in the American tradition—"we must never forget that we are heirs to one of the grandest and most nearly realized worldpictures in all history"—that the very writing of history now became for him a series of picturesque and exciting vignettes of the past—Roger Williams bringing the great tradition of Puritan liberalism to New England; Franklin shining in all his natural grace at the French court; Jefferson building his republican projects at Monticello; Sam Adams plotting the Revolution in Boston. Reaching, as it were, for an image of the repose and nobility that so few characters in any Dos Passos novel ever knew, he now found it in the portraiture of the fresh and burgeoning world of eighteenth-century America: the iron forges, the deer in the woods, Jefferson's classic integrity, the moment when the flag was first raised over Fort Pitt at the gateway to the Alleghenies, and it was felt that "the level land of the lakes and rivers would be the nursery of a new century of the young republic."

A golden haze indeed now lay over the past, and with the triumphant popular success of *The Flowering of New England* and *New England: Indian Summer*—the first two volumes in Van Wyck Brooks's projected history of American literature—it became clear that even literary history could now be written with all the ceremonious pageantry of the historical novel. For what was so distinctive about Brooks's loving portrait of the nineteenth-century New England mind was that for all its incidental brilliance of observa-

tion, it was the work of a critic who was fundamentally no longer interested in criticism. His history was an affectionate pilgrimage to the great shrines of the past, a radiant and mellifluous avowal of love and pride in a tradition, and it was just Brooks's ability to touch all the departed figures in his work with his own radiance that made his work so eloquent a testament. Where another writer would have described the lives of his characters in an effort to understand their books better, Brooks seemed almost more interested in the authors than in their books. What he was aiming at, as had already been clear in *The Life of Emerson*, was not a desire to meet Emerson—and Emerson's time—as contemporaries, but a sweet and shining epic of a lost heroic tradition, a kind of American Nibelungenlied in which all the gods were literary men and women and all their passions revolved around a distinctive moral idealism. What he was aiming at, in a word, was an epic in heroic tone, an uncovered tradition of ancient dignity and Emersonian sweetness, of aspiration and culture, of a certain delicious quaintness and inspiring integrity, in which author, background, and book were commingled.

So strong was Brooks's desire to make this past come alive in the spirit of the historical novel that he even called his second volume a "sequel" to his first, and wrote in explanation of his emphasis on Boston in that second volume that he had done so partly because he wished to give the book "a unity of place." The writers who streamed through his pages were all characters in a great historical drama, perhaps the noblest and most commanding in American history, and what they had written served to characterize them as actors in it. The emphasis was all on personalities and friendships, the evocation of atmosphere and scenes. One of the chapters in *New England: Indian Summer* was significantly titled "Country Pictures," and all through the two volumes one could see Brooks aiming at "effects" and dramatic revelations and climaxes—a succession of brilliant and often moving scenes, felicitous recreations of lost moments in time, that could be (most explicitly in the chapter on Emily Dickinson) totally unrelated to the writer's work. The scenes, the scenes were the great thing: Washington Allston moving like a great sage through the Boston of 1815; John Quincy Adams remembering proudly that he had said the Lord's Prayer

every night of his life and "had never mumbled it once"; Emerson listening to the Aeolian harp receiving the winds on his porch; Thoreau in the woods; Howells and James walking up and down the streets of Cambridge at night dreaming of future conquests in the novel; Francis James Child, the sailmaker's son, collecting his ballads and tending his roses; Francis Parkman, blind and broken with illness, fighting like a wounded knight to finish his books.

Here, America, here, Brooks seemed to be saying in exultant pride on every page, is your tradition, and what a tradition! What men! What faith! What scholars! In tribute to Emerson's great generation he wrote:

As heirs of the Revolution they spoke for the liberal world-community. As men who loved the land and rural customs, they shared the popular life in its roots, at its source. As readers and students of the classics, they followed great patterns of behaviour, those that Europeans followed also. . . . If they believed in progress, and felt that America led the way, they professed their faith in a fashion that commanded respect, for they had known doubts and struggles, wars and vigils. . . . They had cultivated their gardens, they knew the country, the seacoast and the homestead, the lakes and mountains.

Lost that great world might be, lost in time; yet by recreating its pageantry, by learning from its accumulated example, there was sustenance for contemporary spirits. What was so moving as the memory of John Quincy Adams (so much a greater man than his querulous grandson Henry), diplomat, scholar, poet, scientist, teacher, Secretary of State, President of the United States, an old Roman who had not been ashamed to return to Congress after leaving the White House, nor too tired to journey to Cincinnati on a flatboat in the dead of winter to dedicate an observatory to the spirit of science that should flourish in the young republic? What heroic example out of the past did any contemporary nation possess as fine as the moral devotion of Wendell Phillips, the purity of Emerson, the courage of Thoreau, the scholarship of Prescott and Parkman, the flinty idealism of Whittier, the radiant spirit of Longfellow?

For Brooks himself, as had been clear ever since he had written his preliminary idyll in *The Life of Emerson*, the wheel had come full circle. In a period of unparalleled crisis of spirit, a period

when the whole modern movement he had once helped to shape had reached its climax, he had fashioned for himself a purpose seemingly beyond criticism and even creative literature: he had become, like Fichte or Treitschke, the celebrator of a national tradition, the historian who delved into the past so that he could sustain and arm his countrymen in time of danger. For thirty years and more he had written criticism, as the great nineteenth-century masters he loved had written criticism—as a form of moral instruction, a guide to spiritual fulfillment. For thirty years and more he had lamented the alienation of American writers from their native roots, but had documented and illuminated that rootlessness in a spirit of tragic justification. And all through those years he had been the prophet of only one central, all-pervading idea: that the great writer is only the voice of the culture to which he belongs, the culture in which he is rooted and which he accepts. In the words of D. H. Lawrence, with which Brooks now crowned *The Flowering of New England*: "Men are free when they are in a living homeland . . . free when they are obeying some deep, inward voice of religious belief . . . free when they belong to a living, organic, believing community, active in fulfilling some unfulfilled, perhaps unrealized purpose." Now he had no longer any reason to lament the absence of that spirit in America. He had found it, like buried treasure, under the ground men walked in America, found it in their own past—a standard, an image of belief and security.

Most significantly, out of his rapture in that recovered past Brooks had found a fighting faith for himself, and he now turned it furiously upon all those modern writers in France and England, as well as in America—the Eliots, the Joyces, the Prousts—who had dominated letters in the period between two wars. For it was at this point, with the emergence of so self-consciously contemporary an American mythology, that Brooks passed from his renewal of faith in the native tradition to a bitter attack on all that which in his mind had departed from it and corrupted it, all that which now seemed to impede the mobilization of the democratic spirit at a time when democracy needed every available resource to survive. It was not merely for Brooks himself that the wheel had come full circle; in so unparalleled a crisis the whole tradition of modernism to which Brooks had once contributed was now called into ques-

tion. Along with writers like Archibald MacLeish, Howard Mumford Jones, Lewis Mumford, Brooks now protested that too many modern writers had failed themselves, failed or even betrayed the democratic hope, failed in their responsibility as humanists and citizens. In the light of the tradition he had recovered Brooks could now see only a degeneracy of will and spirit, an egotism and a subtle corruption, on the part of those who should have been at the very least leaders in the mobilization against Fascism.

Brooks's attack, particularly in such a book as *The Opinions of Oliver Allston*, was primarily a call to arms; but it was significant also because it brought to a head a certain self-disgust that had been evident in contemporary writing. Where Archibald MacLeish fell upon the antiwar novels written in the twenties, and Howard Mumford Jones complained that the irreverence of modern letters had produced a race of young people who had no "mythology" with which to fight the Fascist mythology, Brooks's attack was leveled against what he felt to be the moral irresponsibility of contemporary literature. And it was just here that his stridency exposed him to the charge by T. S. Eliot that he "might have been interested in not merely denouncing modern art, but in enquiring *why* it is what it is." For Brooks's intense personal attacks confused the issue and served no purpose. There is sickness in contemporary literature, a very great sickness; but it is hardly self-willed, and it is bound up with the situation of contemporary humanity. Brooks, by calling some writers "rattlesnakes" in the narrowly censorious fashion with which an Irving Babbitt had so often been moved to call them degenerates, missed the laborious integrity of modern writers, their will to understand, to live, to create insofar as the world will allow them to. He missed, in his attack on Proust, the profound moral structure and genius of Proust's great work; in his attack on Eliot, Eliot's extraordinary services in behalf of the continuity of the Western tradition and of a new language for poetry; in his attack on Joyce, Joyce's passionate devotion to the life of art, to mention nothing more, in a world where art was as never before the embodiment of the life of reason. Brooks saw his own morality and belief in humanity; he forgot that one does not have to intone a standard to live and write by one, and that those who intone too self-righteously may have nothing left but a standard.

There was nothing in Brooks's attack writers could learn from; he had simply withdrawn his sympathy and understanding from them, and his message was too abstract, too hollow in its evangelicism. The moral paralysis that can be found in certain writers today is real enough, and with it the self-contentment of those who do not know that literature lives by something more than literature. But you cannot relieve that paralysis by calling it wickedness; and Tolstoy and John Greenleaf Whittier, while noble men both, do not mix very well for a writer talking about writing. What was particularly lamentable in Brooks's attack was its essential remoteness from literature. Literature will live fully again when the world is able to live fully again; the "primary" virtues in literature may come back only when men are bound up again in the indivisible moral life of humanity. But if they do come back, it will be not merely because the world has attained some semblance of order, but even more because, in times of terror and human hazard like our own, men have kept their responsibility to literature and to themselves. Literature lives by faith and *works*. Joyce may be the "dead ash of a burnt-out cigar," but the Joyce who worked away at *Ulysses* during the last war kept something alive in the European tradition that those who merely spoke in the name of that tradition did not. Brooks defeated his own best purpose by yielding to an impatience with writers as writers, to the panicky call to action and conformism that had been depressingly familiar in literature after 1930. The pressure of the times was too great for him; it made for so confused a sense of urgency that he forgot that writers are never of any use to themselves, or to society, when they are beaten into shape.

Yes, the pressure of the times is too great; it beats upon all of us. Literature today lives on the narrow margin of security that the democratic West, fighting for its life, can afford; and that margin may grow more narrow every day. The pressure of that struggle beats upon us and all our culture; it beats upon the Hemingways and the Eliots, the Joyces and the Prousts, the wasteland and the grandeur; it beats upon the ardors and accidents, the laborious struggles for realism and realization that make up our modern American literature; it beats equally upon the modernism that dazzled the world between wars and the facile expiation that would

wipe it all away. It beats upon us in America as it beats upon all the nations and all the living and the dead; and our whole modern democratic culture is being tried by it. Never was it so imperative as it is now not to sacrifice any of the values that give our life meaning; never was it so imperative for men to be equal to the evil that faces them and not submissive to its terror. The world seems to be waiting, waiting for its new order; everything we do, everything we believe in this moment of climacteric, can help to shape the future toward which men are moving in such agony today. It is not for us, then, but for the Axis Ministers of Culture—the half-men, the death's-heads grinning over their spoil of our time—to impose an external unity upon culture; it is only those who have no culture and no belief in culture who resent differences among men and the explorations of the human imagination. For the rest, the past is what it is; the record of modern literature in America is what men have made it. *"They will have seen the new truth in larger and larger degree; and when it shall have become the old truth, they will perhaps see it all."* We have seen it become the "old truth." We have not even begun to see it all—and what it may become.

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ROBERT E. SHERWOOD

AS ONE OF AMERICA's great dramatists, Robert Sherwood showed, when *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* made its appearance, in 1938, how the creative insight of a literary artist could be used to inject meaning and life into historical situations. *Roosevelt and Hopkins* displays the same talent applied to the much more complicated subject of the Second World War. Despite the epic nature of the action, a sense of intimacy remains. The forces of history are overwhelming, but the author never permits the reader to forget that it is individual men with personal reactions who are caught up in them.

The framework upon which the story has been built is the figure of Harry Hopkins, New Dealer and Franklin Roosevelt's close associate during the crucial war years. The book took its departure from the voluminous records which Hopkins had gathered and from which he was preparing to write his own account when lingering illness brought him to his death in 1946. Sherwood agreed to complete the task, which had not progressed beyond a preliminary sorting of materials.

With this mass of evidence as a core, Sherwood proceeded to buttress his research by a series of interviews with people who had known Hopkins in his various capacities and who had shared with him the top secrets of the war itself. As a frequent visitor at the White House and as the Director of the Overseas Branch of the Office of War Information, Sherwood was able to add his personal observations. With so impressive a fund of information available to a man of Sherwood's consummate literary ability,

the result could not be other than it was: one of the most distinguished books yet produced in a field already crowded with significant works.

Although the future may produce more comprehensive accounts of the war years, it is doubtful that anyone will duplicate Sherwood's delineation of key personalities. The anecdotes and the glimpses he gives of what was happening behind the scenes not only humanize the narrative but make understandable a good deal that documents can never reveal. The major portion of the book concerns the years of conflict, but a prefatory section traces Hopkins' career in Washington, from his appointment as Relief Administrator in 1933. Because Hopkins and many of the war leaders were in the limelight during the 1930's, Sherwood's story extends back from Pearl Harbor into the domestic phases of the New Deal.

Sherwood's purpose is to tell how men thought and acted rather than to give a critique of American diplomacy. Nevertheless, he makes certain assumptions which color a considerable part of his findings. In the field of foreign policy, his comments are premised upon the idea that America was so intimately involved in the world crisis that no species of isolationist policy was proper to follow. Whereas more formal historians might undertake to examine alternative views, Sherwood assumes that credit should be given to anyone who shared his own preconception.

Even though Sherwood was fundamentally sympathetic to the New Deal and to the President's war policies, he was interested in telling the whole truth as he understood it rather than in presenting a documented eulogy. Instead of minimizing the conflicts within the New Deal family—for example, between Hopkins and Harold Ickes and between Cordell Hull and Sumner Welles—Sherwood exposes them to view and clarifies them with illustrative episodes. No effort is made to disguise Hopkins' pacifistic misconceptions during the period of American neutrality; instead, Sherwood expresses the opinion that Hopkins shared

Roosevelt's interventionist ideas only because of his faith in the President's judgment. Roosevelt himself is brought to task for publicly talking about his hopes for peace when he privately anticipated quite the opposite.

Yet it is evident that Sherwood is writing about people whom he admired. Certainly Hopkins and Roosevelt had faults, but faults which Sherwood saw were far outweighed by their virtues. If he reveals their weaknesses, it is not to condemn them but to share with the reader his understanding of men who do not need the defense of expurgated testimony. Although Hopkins is the central figure, Roosevelt dominates the book. As an American, Sherwood is proud of Roosevelt's contribution to the world and believes that his stature will grow instead of diminish as the historical record unfolds. But as a democrat rather than a hero-worshipper, he adds an expression of his concern that one man could become so important to the country's safety.

The Phony War

WHEN the Second World War started the defenses of the United States consisted primarily of a scrap of paper called the Neutrality Law, which the Congress had passed and which President Roosevelt had signed "with reluctance." That piece of legislation, passed originally in 1936, was carefully designed to prevent us from getting into war in 1917. It was purely retroactive, as though its framers believed that it would restore life to the brave men who had died at Chateau Thierry and in the Argonne. It was born of the belief that we could legislate ourselves out of war, as we had once legislated ourselves out of the saloons

From Roosevelt and Hopkins by Robert E. Sherwood, by permission of Harper & Brothers. Copyright, 1948, by Robert E. Sherwood.

(and into the speakeasies). Like Prohibition, it was an experiment "noble in motive" but disastrous in result.

The Second World War started with Hitler's brutal invasion of Poland from the West, followed by the Soviet Union's march into Poland from the East. Britain and France declared war on Germany, in fulfillment of their pledge to Poland, but for nearly eight months there was no fighting by the Western Allies except for isolated naval engagements. The Soviet Union attacked Finland and gained certain territorial advantages thereby, but Hitler remained quiescent and allowed his neighbors to continue in a state of quivering suspense during the autumn and winter of 1939-40. This became known as the period of "the Phony War" and it was the heyday of isolationism in the United States. It was one crisis in Roosevelt's career when he was completely at a loss as to what action to take—a period of terrible, stultifying vacuum.

In October, 1939, Hopkins wrote from his sickbed to his brother Emory in Portland, Oregon. He said:

The only interest here, as everywhere, is the war and I believe that we really can keep out of it. Fortunately there is no great sentiment in this country for getting into it although I think almost everyone wants to see England and France win.

In those two sentences Hopkins unconsciously stated the greatest problem that Roosevelt had to face in his entire Administration, the greatest problem any President had faced at least since Lincoln made the determination against the urgent advice of almost all of his Cabinet to send relief to Fort Sumter. I believe that Hopkins' tendency was naturally isolationist, he was certainly a pacifist, as were so many other liberals; he had only the vaguest concept of the deadly peril to American security that Roosevelt saw in the world situation.

In his speech to a Canadian audience at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario, a year previously, Roosevelt had said:

We in the Americas are no longer a far away continent to which the eddies of controversies beyond the seas could bring no interest or no harm. Instead, we in the Americas have become a consideration to every propaganda office and to every general staff beyond the seas. The vast amount of our resources, the vigor of our commerce and the

strength of our men have made us vital factors in world peace whether we choose it or not.

When Roosevelt said that, as when he made the Quarantine Speech, he was accused by the isolationists of exaggerating dangerously for the purpose of creating undue alarm. "What European general staff," they asked, "could possibly be concerned with the Western Hemisphere?" But Roosevelt in his own mind was not exaggerating in any of his prewar speeches: he was erring on the side of understatement. Although he was no great authority on military strategy, and gave almost unqualified freedom of decision during the war to his Chiefs of Staff, the knowledge that he did possess was basic. The first point in his military credo was that an ocean is not necessarily a barrier—it is a broad highway. His considerable knowledge of geography and of navigation gave him understanding of the importance of the bases from which traffic on that highway could be controlled. His thinking was, of course, essentially naval, which meant that he did not look very far beyond the bridgeheads secured by Marines; however, he knew what the essential bridgeheads were—the British Isles, France, the Iberian Peninsula, the North and West Coasts of Africa and, in the Pacific, the Netherlands East Indies, the Philippines and the Marianas. Early in 1939, some unidentified Senator told the press that, in the course of a secret White House conference on the European situation, the President had said, "Our American frontier is on the Rhine." That quotation was hailed joyously in Britain and in France, and with threatening indignation in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. The isolationists at home set up angry howls of protest. When questioned about it at a subsequent press conference, Roosevelt denounced the quotation as a "deliberate lie" and referred to the anonymous informant as "some boob." Nevertheless, whether or not Roosevelt actually made the statement, he most certainly did believe that America's eastern frontier was on the Rhine and it was on this belief that he acted when he risked political suicide in his efforts to break through the Neutrality Law and to get aid to those who fought against Axis aggression. He was unable to get such aid through effectively in time to keep the frontier on the Rhine; but he was able to help incalculably in keeping it on the English Channel and the Straits of Gibraltar.

When the war actually broke out in Europe, Roosevelt was tame

enough in his first public statements to satisfy the most timid. He said:

This nation will remain a neutral nation, but I cannot ask that every American remain neutral in thought as well. Even a neutral has a right to take account of facts. Even a neutral cannot be asked to close his mind or his conscience. . . .

I hope the United States will keep out of this war. I believe that it will. And I give you assurance and reassurance that every effort of our Government will be directed toward that end.

This last may be denounced as, at worst, deliberately misleading or, at best, as wishful thinking. The inescapable fact is that this was what Roosevelt felt compelled to say in order to maintain any influence over public opinion and over Congressional action. Two weeks after the war started he called Congress into extraordinary session to repeal the arms embargo provisions of the Neutrality Law and thus permit the sale of war matériel to England and France on a "cash and carry" basis. Even this meager concession had to be asked for on the grounds that the embargo provisions were, "in my opinion, most vitally dangerous to American neutrality, American security and, above all, American peace." It is my belief—and this is pure speculation—that at this time and up to the fall of France Roosevelt was wishfully hoping that Britain and France would prove indomitable in the West, that the Soviet Union would keep Germany contained in the East, that this stalemate would last until the German people would become fed up with "guns before butter" and revolt, thereby bursting the Nazi bubble so that peace would be restored without the need for American armed intervention. It seems quite evident that Roosevelt did not have full comprehension of the real, paralyzing force of the Nazi fury, nor of the imminence of the danger to the United States, until the Blitzkrieg was hurled into France in the spring of 1940. At that point, I am sure, he became convinced—and this is not speculation—that if Britain fell disastrous war for the United States would be inevitable, that Germany would attack the Western Hemisphere, probably at first in Latin America, as soon as she had assembled a sufficient naval force and transport and cargo fleet (not too long a process, with all the shipbuilding facilities of Europe at Germany's disposal) and that Japan would concurrently go on the rampage in the Pacific.

One major factor in Roosevelt's thinking as the war began is a matter of certainty: his greatest fear then and subsequently was of a negotiated peace, another Munich. Here again was demonstration of the fear of fear itself. He communicated his concern to the British Government through extra-official channels (specifically, Lord Beaverbrook) and he started his historic correspondence with Winston Churchill—whom he addressed as the "Naval Person"—recognizing in him his foremost British ally in awareness of the folly of any attempt to do business with Hitler. (Churchill's cables to Roosevelt were usually addressed to "FORUS," the initials of "President of the United States.") Roosevelt's fear of a negotiated peace was based on the conviction that it would be dictated by the same craven considerations that dictated the surrender at Munich—fear of Nazi might and fear that, if Nazi might were eliminated, Germany would no longer be a buffer state between Russia and the West. It was obvious to Roosevelt as it should have been to any other informed observer that Hitler wanted a negotiated peace because it would work in so many ways to his advantage:

(1) It would further strengthen his position in Germany, providing conclusive proof to the German people that he could hoodwink Britain and France into selling another small country into slavery (in this case, Poland) rather than to risk actual war.

(2) It would give Germany time to consolidate her gains in Czechoslovakia and Poland and further to increase her rearmament, particularly in the building of submarines, airplanes and the Siegfried Line.

(3) It would tend to push public sentiment in Britain and France—and most of all in the United States—back into the peacetime isolationist ruts, and thereby retard if not nullify all efforts in the democracies to prepare for war.

(4) It would convince the Russians—and the Japanese—that the Western democracies were completely spineless and decadent, as Hitler and Mussolini had so long and so loudly proclaimed them to be.

Thus, Roosevelt was on sure ground when he urged that a negotiated peace would give Hitler the one or two years' respite that he needed to prepare for conquest of Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the major part of the Atlantic world; but, when the European

Allies asked Roosevelt, as France in effect did, "What will *you* do to back us up?"—he could only reply that he had virtually nothing to offer more tangible than his personal good will. He could utter brave words but, when deeds were called for, he was hogtied by the prevailing isolationist sentiment.

Since I use the word "isolationists" frequently in these pages, perhaps it would be well to clarify it. Actually, in the first year or more of war, the ranks of the isolationists included the overwhelming majority of the American people who would have been glad to see the European war end on almost any inconclusive terms merely as a guarantee that the United States would not be drawn into it. Public opinion on this score was much more nearly unanimous and more clearly expressed than it had been in 1914-17. It is true that in the First World War there was substantially more pro-German sentiment in the United States: large numbers of German-Americans then still held close cultural and emotional ties with the Fatherland, for the Hohenzollern brand of imperialism, while objectionable to the average American, did not inspire the same horror and loathing as Nazism. The American people were, in a way, more truly neutral in 1914 than they were twenty-five years later. However, Americans in 1939 were fortified with the experience that the previous generation had conspicuously lacked, the experience of involvement in European war, and they wanted no more of it. The impulse to let "Europe stew in its own juice" was a very powerful one and an entirely understandable one, for there were too many Americans who considered that their country's only reward for coming to the aid of Britain and France in 1918 was to be given the name of "Uncle Shylock." (As Roosevelt remarked many times, "We fortunately never had a chance to find out what our 'reward' would have been if Germany had won that war.") Thus, isolationist sentiment in 1939 was not limited to Americans of German birth or descent, or to those who loved German music and admired German science and industry, or to those who were pure pacifists: it was representative of the entire American people save for a diminutive minority of those who believed that a victory for Hitler would put the security of our own country and our own constitutional democracy in deadly peril. The first wartime Roper poll taken in September, 1939, gave eloquent testimony to the state of the nation's thinking.

It will be seen that the extreme interventionist sentiment was limited to 2.5 per cent of the population. Isolationist sentiment was, of course, much stronger among women than among men. The sectional breakdown of this analysis showed very little difference between the New England and Middle Atlantic States and those in the Middle West but far more interventionist sentiment below the Mason-Dixon Line and, somewhat surprisingly, in the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast States. (It should be remembered that this public opinion poll did not contemplate the possibility of war with Japan, the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis not having been formed at that time.)

Which of these comes closest to describing what you think America should do about the present European war?

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Sex</i>		<i>Age</i>	
		<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Under 40</i>	<i>Over 40</i>
	%	%	%	%	%
Enter the war at once on the side of England, France and Poland ...	2.5	3.6	1.3	2.1	2.8
Find some way of supporting Germany ....	.2	.2	.1	.1	.3
Take no sides and stay out of the war entirely, but offer to sell to anyone on a cash-and-carry basis	37.5	43.0	32.2	37.8	37.2
Do not enter the war but supply England, France and Poland with materials and food, and refuse to ship anything to Germany	8.9	9.0	8.7	8.8	9.0
Stay out for now and for as long as we can, but go into war on the side of England and France if they are in real danger of losing, and in the meantime help that side with food and materials ...	14.7	16.1	13.3	15.4	14.0

Have nothing to do with any warring coun- try—don't even trade with them on a cash- and-carry basis	29.9	23.6	36.1	29.9	29.9
Other—Pro-Ally . . . . .	.6	.8	.6	.7	.6
Other—Pro-Germany ..	—	—	—	—	—
Other—Favoring neither side	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.5	2.2
Don't know	3.9	1.9	5.8	3.7	4.0

The all-out isolationist faction which would have "nothing to do with any warring country" was close to thirty per cent and this remained a pretty constant figure through all of the opinion tests that were made over such issues as Selective Service, the destroyers-for-bases deal, Lend Lease, etc. This thirty per cent represented the hard core of isolationists and included in it were such strange bedfellows as all the native Fascist organizations, which hailed Hitler as the champion against Bolshevism, and all the members of the Communist party and their fellow travelers; for this was the age of that colossal anomaly, the Nazi-Soviet mutual nonaggression pact. The Fascist groups and individuals were unimportant numerically but they had an altogether disproportionate capacity for noisemaking (like the Communists) and they were by no means a negligible force in spreading the propaganda line as dictated by Goebbels from Berlin.

Immeasurably stronger were the racial and religious groups who favored extreme isolationism. I do not believe that the German-Americans should be included among these for the great majority of them were appalled by what Hitler had done to the land of their forefathers and those who joined or even tolerated the German-American Bund were fortunately few in number. The Scandinavians, particularly in the North Middle West, were considerably more emphatic than the Germans in championing strict neutrality but this sentiment was later affected by the invasions of Denmark and Norway. The Italian-Americans as a group were not necessarily in favor of Fascism but they admired the seeming accomplishments of Mussolini in restoring Italy to the dignity of a great power and there were many of them who were mortally offended by Roosevelt's reference to the "stab in the back." The more rabid Irish-Americans who

constituted a potent political force in some of the larger metropolitan areas were, as always, inclined to cheer for anyone who was fighting against England and they were at this time given effective leadership by the violent pamphleteer and radio star, Father Charles E. Coughlin. Because of Father Coughlin and the activities of such subversive organizations as the Christian Front, as well as the sentiments of so many Irish- and Italian-Americans, the Catholic Church became identified to a certain extent in the public mind with the cause of extreme isolationism. However, the Polish-Americans, who formed an important part of the Catholic community, were of course bitterly anti-Nazi as well as anti-Communist.

Organized labor, the greatest unit of support for Roosevelt, was now an uncertain quantity. The unions under Communist domination dutifully followed the party line of all-out isolationism and so did those under the control of John L. Lewis, the bitterest Roosevelt-hater of them all. The great bulk of labor while unquestionably anti-Nazi was also anti-war, fearing that United States involvement would retard or even destroy the gains made by labor under the New Deal. I believe that much the same sentiment had prevailed in the Labor party in Great Britain before the war; it had certainly prevailed in the C.G.T. in France.

The chief leadership and the essential financing of isolationism as a political faction were provided by men and women who belonged to no particular group: there were a number of businessmen, like General Robert E. Wood, Jay Hormel, and James D. Mooney, who simply believed that Hitler was going to win and that the United States had better plan to "do business" with him; and there were technicians, of whom the arch example was Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh, who were so impressed with the technological achievements of Hitler's regimented state, as contrasted with the hopeless inefficiency of democracy, that they believed Fascism constituted "the wave of the future." It was such as these, together with assorted sufferers from the virulent xenophobia of the Hearst-Patterson-McCormick press, who formed the America First Committee, the ultimate spearhead of isolationism.

There were, in addition, considerable numbers of liberals, and many of them in the Roosevelt Administration itself, who opposed the President's unneutral policy because of a pacifistic fear that

involvement in war, or even preparation therefor, would produce an interruption in social progress and an assault upon civil liberties such as that which occurred under A. Mitchell Palmer, Alien Property Custodian and Attorney General in the Wilson Administration. As I have indicated, Harry Hopkins would undoubtedly have been included with his friends Senator Robert M. La Follette and Robert M. Hutchins in this category of liberal isolationists had it not been for his fervent conviction that Roosevelt could not possibly be wrong on any major issue. It was the liberal group—and, to a much lesser extent, the Communists—who made the greatest appeal to youth in the country and inspired so many “Keep Us Out of War” demonstrations on so many campuses.

There was another and extremely important element in the thinking of liberals and of countless middle-of-the-road Americans whose political affiliations were hazy but whose impulses were essentially decent: that was profound distrust of the reactionary leaders in Britain and France who had gone to Munich once and might well go there again. Here was an honest and intelligent sentiment which dishonest and dangerously stupid men could exploit. The records of calculated British propaganda in America in the First World War as they had been set down by such thoughtful and reasonable writers as Walter Millis and Quincy Howe evoked too many malodorous memories. Before the advent of calamity in Western Europe and of Winston Churchill, the Allied cause did not have a good smell even in the nostrils of those who hated Fascism and all its evil works. The same general sentiment applied—although to a far lesser extent, because of public ignorance of the area—to the Kuomintang regime in China. It was not easy to answer the question: should American boys die fighting Fascism in Europe and Asia in order to defend neo-Fascism? The unworthy Frenchmen who raised the cry, “Why should we die for Danzig?” raised more echoes in American hearts than Goebbels or Gayda ever did. Early in 1939 that understanding, objective, sharp-witted Scot, Robert Bruce Lockhart, author of *British Agent* and many other books, went on a lecture tour of the United States. In a later book, *Comes the Reckoning*, he wrote:

The effect of my lectures, like that of most British lecturers, was insignificant, if not indeed harmful, and the only benefit of my tour was self-education.

Lockhart summarized the average American's attitude toward Britain's problems in these words:

"We Americans went into the last war to save democracy. We pulled you out of a hole and we received very grudging thanks. At Versailles and after Versailles you trampled on democratic ideals. Now, largely through your own fault, you are in trouble again and you want our help. Well, we've learnt our lesson."

Lockhart later became Director General of the Political Warfare Executive, which was attached to the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Information. Perhaps because of his own experience and his remarkably realistic appraisal thereof, the British sent no lecturers to the United States during the entire war, except when specifically requested to do so by the American authorities. The mistakes of the First World War were not repeated.

What Lockhart encountered may be described as the essential "grass roots" sentiment, which was strongly represented in the Congress together with all the various prejudices and fears that always beset little men. There was another powerful influence in the Congress: this was the kind of crossroads chauvinism which afflicts minor politicians who know they can always get applause by indulging in eagle-screaming—the kind of picayune parochialism which contends that all "furriners," particularly Englishmen and Frenchmen, are slick deceivers who are out to pull the wool over the eyes of poor, innocent, gullible Uncle Sam the while they deftly extract the gold from his teeth. I am not suggesting that Congress was dominated by this spirit, nor that the Republicans had any more of it than the Democrats; but it was always there and always highly vocal and such forceful isolationist leaders as Senator Burton K. Wheeler (Democrat, of Montana), and Representative Joseph W. Martin, Jr. (Republican, of Massachusetts), knew well how to mobilize it.

When I speak of the "isolationists," from now on, I shall refer particularly to those in the Congress who were in a position to block the Roosevelt measures and, from their rostrum on Capitol Hill, to publicize what they considered his attempts to dupe the American people into a war which they believed was none of our business. It was a curious fact that these extreme isolationists were not pacifists in the sense that they opposed war, as such; indeed, their attitude toward the Soviet Union—and also, in some cases, toward Japan—

was one of extreme belligerency. They seemed to be in favor of fighting under two essential conditions: (1) that all battles be staged on our own home grounds, in the Western Hemisphere (otherwise, it would be a "foreign" war); and (2) that in the war we keep ourselves pure, and therefore "100 per cent American," by having no allies whatsoever. Evidently it was felt that we had made a terrible mistake in 1918 by fighting in France together with Allies who had turned out to be ingrates, and so we must be careful never to do that again. The Roosevelt doctrine was that if we were to get into a war we should fight it as far from our own shores as possible and with the greatest number of allies, regardless of ideology, that we could enlist, accepting whatever risks there might be of potential ingratitude after the common enemies had been disposed of.

The myopic form of Congressional isolationism can best be expressed by two quotations of the period. The first was from Representative John G. Alexander, a Minnesota Republican. In a letter to the President on Selective Service, he wrote:

Why take our youth from their homes and out of the wholesome environment in which most of them are living, and transplant them into the lonely inhospitable and disturbing and discouraging arena of a training camp? Their mental, moral and physical well-being is too important to be disregarded in that way. . . . Mr. President, we want no foreign wars, we want none of our American boys to fight in foreign lands or seas, we want only to prepare to protect and defend our own shores and border.

The other quotation was from Senator Robert A. Taft:

I do not know what the Germans may do, and no one knows what they may do until they are freed from the present war and have an opportunity to show. When they do, we can adopt the same methods. We can take the same steps that may be necessary to meet the particular kind of German "blitzkrieg," if there is such a blitzkrieg, at the time we find out what it is.

In other words, we were to fight only (1) when the enemy, having previously disposed of all of our potential allies, had arrived at our shores or "border" and (2) after he had revealed to us all of the new weapons and tactics that he proposed to employ for our destruction. These two quotations might well be printed at the start of the most elementary textbook used at West Point and Annapolis in order to

teach student officers what they must first contend with in their careers of service to the United States.

In his constantly delicate and difficult relations with the Congress in matters of foreign policy, Roosevelt was constantly careful to avoid what Tolstoy called "the irrevocable act." He now carried a heavy share of responsibility for the future history of the world. If he were to go before the Congress with a request for action on an issue of international importance and were defeated, it would involve more than gleeful editorials in the *Chicago Tribune* and possible losses for the Democratic party at the next elections; it could well involve utter, world-wide disaster. The melancholy story has been told of the meeting in the President's study one evening a few weeks before war broke out in Europe at which Roosevelt and Cordell Hull told Vice President Garner, Senator William E. Borah and other Senators of their conviction that war might be averted by immediate amendment of the Neutrality Act. Hull argued the point with tears in his eyes, but Borah brushed him off with the statement that his private sources of information assured him there would be no war ("Germany isn't ready for it"); and Garner ended the meeting by saying, cheerfully, to Roosevelt: "Well, Captain, we may as well face the facts. You haven't got the votes, and that's all there is to it." Roosevelt did not forget that experience and neither did Hull, who had more respect than Roosevelt did for the dignity and authority of the Congress. Before Roosevelt asked for anything else in the next two years, he was extremely careful to make sure that he had "the votes." He hesitated to take a chance which might result in an adverse vote—or even a fairly close vote—in the Congress and thereby render aid and comfort to the Germans and Japanese and discouragement and demoralization to those who fought them. It is not easy for the average citizen to appreciate the extent to which every word, every implication, uttered by the President of the United States, as well as every action committed by him, may bolster the courage or deepen the despair of hundreds of millions of people in lands overseas. But Roosevelt appreciated it. His cautious policy of one step at a time often infuriated the extreme interventionists who often asked, "Why doesn't he go to Congress and demand a declaration of war *now*?" Had he done so in the summer of 1940, for example, when Britain was fighting alone, he would undoubtedly have

been repudiated by the Congress and that might well have been the signal to the British people that their cause was hopeless and that they had no choice but surrender. I think that the criticism aimed at Roosevelt by the interventionists caused him more temporary irritation than that hurled at him day after day by the isolationists. Shortly before Christmas, 1939, someone sent him a copy of a poem written by Joseph Warren in 1775, the first verse of which was as follows:

Lift up your hands, ye heroes,
And swear with proud disdain;
The wretch that would ensnare you
Shall lay his snares in vain.
Should Europe empty all her force
We'll meet her in array
And fight and shout and fight for free Amerikay.

The correspondent—name unknown to me—who sent that to the President explained that “according to Carl Sandburg, the pronunciation ‘Amerikay’ was customary with both Lincoln and Jeff Davis.”

Roosevelt sent a copy of this verse to Hopkins with the following letter:

Those verses by Joseph Warren, written in 1775, are interesting as showing that a matter of four million people with few resources thought even in those days that they could lick the world. I fear that today altogether too many people in Amerikay want, as they did then, to “fight and shout and fight.” Some of us believe there would be more shouting than fighting.

Roosevelt, normally one who interpreted his constitutional powers in the broadest possible terms, might have used the immediate impact of European war to assume authority far beyond that of the normal peacetime President. But he did just the opposite. In a press conference following his Proclamation of Limited Emergency, on September 8, 1939, he clarified his intentions by saying:

There is no intention and no need of doing all those things that could be done. . . . There is no thought in any shape, manner or form, of putting the Nation, either in its defenses or in its internal economy, on a war basis. That is one thing we want to avoid. We are going to keep the Nation on a peace basis, in accordance with peacetime authorizations.

Those were probably the weakest words that Roosevelt ever uttered. He was outdoing even Warren G. Harding by getting the country "back to normalcy" before the war had really started. He was revealing the woeful weakness of his own Administration, especially in the three Departments that mattered most in a time of international crisis—the State Department, War Department and Navy Department.

It is always easy to poke fun at the State Department—indeed, it ranks second only to the Congress as a target for those who like to indulge in the inexpensive pastime of ridiculing our government—but it is considerably less easy to understand the peculiar difficulties which afflicted the Department in 1940 and thereafter. Cordell Hull had set as his worthy goal the prevention of a Second World War. He was deeply injured when Borah contemptuously dismissed the Department's information as inferior to his own; for Hull, any reflection on his Department constituted an affront to his personal honor and pride—and, as an old soldier of Tennessee, he had plenty of both. Hull's admirable crusade for reciprocal trade was frustrated by the war, and he found himself largely restricted to the maintenance of hemispheric solidarity—in itself a form of isolationism, according to the Roosevelt concept—as a means of keeping the State Department a factor of importance in the Federal Government. While the British Foreign Office was organized on a basis that contemplated the constant possibility of war as "continuation of policy by other means," the State Department was compelled by twenty years of isolationism to operate on the principle that the Alpha and Omega of American foreign policy is to *keep out of war*. When this became impossible, the functions of the State Department, except in regard to neutral countries, became atrophied. This was a bitter pill for Hull to swallow, and he never did fully digest it. He was extremely jealous of his reputation as one officer of the Administration who had been guilty of no conspicuous blunders and who had been spared the criticism lavished on all the others, including the President himself. However, in times of desperate emergency when drastic, daring action had to be taken quickly, Roosevelt was bound to become impatient with anyone whose primary concern was the maintenance of a personal record of "no runs—no hits—no errors." To an ever greater extent, Roosevelt bypassed Hull to deal directly with

Sumner Welles, or to assign what should have been State Department functions to the Treasury Department, the War Department, or to any other agency or individual who might get things done, including eventually Harry Hopkins, the archetype of what Hull called "the extreme left fringe" surrounding the President. Hull believed that he had been selected by Roosevelt as the man to succeed him at the end of the second term, and this belief was assiduously cultivated and encouraged by James A. Farley—as is discussed elsewhere in these pages. Although Hull had conducted no campaign in his own behalf (Farley was doing that for him) he felt that he had been betrayed, if not by Roosevelt, then by Hopkins and the "extreme left fringe." However, unlike Farley, he finally stood by Roosevelt in the campaign of 1940 and was a powerful force in his re-election; and Roosevelt did not forget this.

Unquestionably, the most lasting and most deplorable element in the distant relations between the White House and its next-door neighbor to the west was the President's close association with Sumner Welles—an association based on long friendship and genuine admiration. I cannot pretend to give the reasons for the animosity that existed between the Secretary and Under Secretary of State. But there is no question of doubt that their conflict became so ugly and so extremely dangerous that it eventually compelled the resignation of Welles, which was a serious loss to Roosevelt, for he placed great dependence on Welles's judgment particularly in all matters relating to the framing of the ultimate peace. These are circumstances of which it is not agreeable to write, and impossible for a contemporary to write without evidence of bias in one form or another. However, history will achieve no complete understanding of Franklin Roosevelt's Administration without knowledge of the intramural feuds which so frequently beset it. (I do not believe that even history will ever be able to understand why he tolerated them to the extent that he did.)

The War Department was weakened by a more obvious and even more impolite running battle between the Secretary, Harry H. Woodring, and Louis A. Johnson, Assistant Secretary. Woodring was isolationist at heart while Johnson believed in all-out armament. Their severe clashes were hardly helpful to the Army at a time when its needs were most desperate.

The Navy Department was in much better shape although its Secretary, Charles Edison, was frail in health and insufficiently enthusiastic about his job. Furthermore, Edison appears to have been singularly complacent about the world situation. On June 21, 1940—the very day when Hitler dictated his armistice terms to Pétain's stunned representatives in the forest of Compiègne—Edison wrote to Hopkins urging the use of airships (dirigibles) for the increase of trade with South America. The following words in this letter were underscored by Hopkins:

We may safely assume, I feel, that as soon as the present situation clears in Europe, Germany will immediately resume her South American airship service, even despite her lack of helium or possibly with Russian helium.

The Navy, like the War Department, was to a lamentable extent cowed by the force of isolationist sentiment on Capitol Hill and was trained to be timid in requests for appropriations. The officers most successful in the Department in peacetime were those whom Congress identified as the most economy minded—and sailors or soldiers who are economy minded rarely win wars.

The officer personnel in both services were anything but blind in devotion to the policies of their Commander in Chief. In the Army, there was a tendency among officers of both ground and air forces to admire Germany for her achievements in building up these arms. This led in some extreme cases to the hope that Germany would conquer England thereby providing historic demonstration of the superiority of land and air power over sea power. Obviously, these sentiments were not shared by Navy officers but, for many of them, the main interest was in the Far East, rather than Europe, and it was their hope that if the United States must go to war the main battleground would be the Pacific.

There was another reason for the weakness of Roosevelt's position during the period of the Phony War, and it was probably the most important reason of all: he was in the last year of his second term as President, and it is one of the classical weaknesses of our American constitutional system that a President who is approaching the end of his tenure of office can exercise little authority in the conduct of foreign affairs. The old theory that politics "ends at the waterline" is nonsense. In times of partisan struggle for power there is no point

at which politics ends and this was particularly true in 1939-40 when all domestic issues became indistinct and insignificant in the shadow of war. If Roosevelt had indicated in 1939 or early 1940 that he *would* run for a third term, then he would have become a candidate rather than a President; his own party would have been divided into pros and cons and the Republicans would have been united in attacking his every policy, foreign and domestic. If he had indicated he would not run again, then his authority would have become negligible at home and nonexistent abroad. His only solution was to shroud his intentions in mystery; in addition to which, it is apparent that for a long time he himself did not know just what these intentions were. This was a period of impotence when, with all of civilization in peril, the leader of the most powerful nation on earth had to wait, day after anxious day, for his own course of action to be shaped by events over which he had no control. It was particularly agonizing for one of his venturesome spirit to be unable to act boldly or even cautiously to plan action in face of impending calamity, of which the Blitzkrieg in Poland had given a suggestion. The world now knew how the Nazis could strike—how their Air Force could paralyze communications—that their tanks were not, as had hopefully been reported, made of ersatz steel. But the French could only crouch behind the Maginot Line, and the British behind the Royal Navy, and the Americans behind the Neutrality Law. And Roosevelt was, for once in his life, deedless and, so far as he was able to say anything of any consequence, speechless. Early in January, 1940, he sent for Sumner Welles, who has written, "He admitted frankly that the chances seemed to him about one in a thousand that anything at all could be done to change the course of events." The one chance as Roosevelt then saw it was to send Welles to Europe to talk to the heads of government in Germany, Italy, France and Britain to determine "the possibilities of concluding any just and permanent peace" but not any "temporary or tentative armed truce." If Roosevelt believed there was any possibility that Hitler would agree to disarm—or even to give up one acre that Germany had seized—he most certainly was thinking wishfully. Welles returned from his mission with discouraging reports about everything except the temper of the British, but with much useful information on the personalities of the men he had met, and Roosevelt was one who knew how to use such

information. It was always of tremendous importance to him to be able to size up the characters of the leaders of both enemy and friendly states.

One may wonder why Welles did not also go to the Soviet Union at the time, but Roosevelt "did not feel that a visit to Moscow would serve any useful purpose." Indeed, then, the prestige of the Soviet Union was so low that it was counted as only a potential victim of Germany and not as a valid aggressive factor. Russia was then involved to the discredit of its arms in the Winter War with little Finland and was making a woefully unimpressive showing. There was no hint revealed of the eventual magnificence of the Red Army in action. Many people have assumed that this was an act of deliberate deception on Russia's part—simulating weakness in order to mask her real strength—but a remark made by Joseph Stalin, printed later in this book, indicated that the weakness then was real.

The war in Finland caused intensification of the isolationist activities of the Communist party in the United States and led to a singular episode at the White House: An American Youth Congress held a convention in Washington in February, 1940, and the delegates assembled on the south lawn of the White House on a raw, rainy day to hear a speech by the President. It was one of the few occasions in his life when Roosevelt was booed and hissed to his face by an audience of Americans. He referred to a resolution, passed by one of the councils of this Youth Congress, against the granting of American aid to Finland on the ground that such action was "an attempt to force America into the imperialistic war." Roosevelt said:

More than twenty years ago, while most of you were very young children, I had the utmost sympathy for the Russian people. In the early days of Communism, I recognized that many leaders in Russia were bringing education and better health and, above all, better opportunity to millions who had been kept in ignorance and serfdom under the imperial regime. I disliked the regimentation under Communism. I abhorred the indiscriminate killings of thousands of innocent victims. I heartily deprecated the banishment of religion—though I knew that some day Russia would return to religion for the simple reason that four or five thousand years of recorded history have proven that mankind has always believed in God in spite of many abortive attempts to exile God.

I, with many of you, hoped that Russia would work out its own problems, and that its government would eventually become a peace-

loving, popular government with a free ballot, which would not interfere with the integrity of its neighbors.

That hope is today either shattered or put away in storage against some better day. The Soviet Union, as everybody who has the courage to face the fact knows, is run by a dictatorship as absolute as any other dictatorship in the world. It has allied itself with another dictatorship, and it has invaded a neighbor so infinitesimally small that it could do no conceivable possible harm to the Soviet Union, a neighbor which seeks only to live at peace as a democracy, and a liberal, forward-looking democracy at that.

It has been said that some of you are Communists. That is a very unpopular term these days. As Americans you have a legal and constitutional right to call yourselves Communists, those of you who do. You have a right peacefully and openly to advocate certain ideals of theoretical Communism; but as Americans you have not only a right but a sacred duty to confine your advocacy of changes in law to the methods prescribed by the Constitution of the United States—and you have no American right, by act or deed of any kind, to subvert the Government and the Constitution of this Nation.

Those words, which appear to have been very carefully chosen, and the boos that greeted them, provide eloquent testimony to the weirdness of the atmosphere that prevailed during the Phony War. For Roosevelt was the President who had first established friendly relations with the Soviet Union, after sixteen years of attempts by the U.S. Government to ignore its existence, and who subsequently rendered decisive aid to the Russians when they became victims of the savage forces they had sought to appease.

During this winter of the Phony War, Churchill paid his respects to the neutral nations of Europe who sought to buy immunity from German aggression by appeasement. He said, "Each one hopes that if he feeds the crocodile enough, the crocodile will eat him last." Churchill evidently liked to use the crocodile as the symbol of Nazi voracity. Years later, when he was explaining the North African operation to Stalin, he drew a picture of a crocodile on a sheet of Kremlin paper and said, "We shall strike him here, in the soft underbelly [the Mediterranean] while at the same time we hit him here, in the snout" [Northern France].

In March, 1940, Hopkins was sufficiently recovered to get out of bed for a few hours each day and go downstairs and even, when the weather was sunny and warm, go out for an occasional drive. But he

was still very weak. He wrote to Henry Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture, asking for help in obtaining some seeds for his garden. Among them were petunias, begonias, ageratums, candy tufts, sweet alyssum, pansies, forget-me-nots, calliopsis, bachelor buttons and white and yellow rose bushes. He told Wallace, "This is to be the extent of the kind of thing I am going to be able to do this spring." (In the years that I knew Hopkins I never saw him take any interest in a flower.)

GEORGE F. KENNAN

THE FIELDS of scholarship and active politics, usually widely separated, are attractively joined in the career of George Kennan. A professional diplomat, he is also a student of foreign affairs who sees in history a key to a better understanding of today's problems.

It is not, however, the scholarship of *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950*, that impresses the historian. Rather, it is the analysis which Kennan has added to facts which are for the most part familiar and dealt with elsewhere more comprehensively. Although he is moderate in tone and generous in his judgments of American diplomats, his point of departure is essentially negative. Primarily concerned with the errors which help to account for the series of international catastrophes in which the country has participated, he condemns both the principle and practice of American diplomacy.

Kennan's basic complaint is against the legalistic-moralistic approach to foreign policy, apparent as early as 1899 in the pronouncement of the "Open Door" policy in China. This method consists in getting a purely verbal commitment among differing powers to pursue a course of action based neither on the realities of the situation nor upon America's willingness to back up its moral sponsorship with force. The view that the morality of nations is similar to that of individuals and, further, that American standards are universal has led to false hopes and illusions of international order. Thus, over a period of years we counted on Japan's formal agreement to principles which she

not only had no intention of living up to but which demanded action so far removed from her real needs as to be virtually impossible irrespective of her moral fiber.

Kennan believes that this moral absolutism has had the unfortunate consequence in times of war of leading the United States to insist upon such demands as "unconditional surrender" and "total victory." These war cries, he thinks, are a poor substitute for a careful analysis of the conditions necessary for a lasting peace. Since the world cannot be remade, only limited objectives are possible to achieve. Similarly, the United States should realize that the idea of complete triumph is at odds with its limited military potential. The victory in the Second World War could have been won only by an alliance with a totalitarian power with quite different objectives which would inevitably share the control of the postwar world.

In substitution, Kennan offers a foreign policy based upon realities and a frank appraisal of what is necessary to maintain a favorable balance of power. This policy should not embarrass our friends or underestimate our enemies. It should not insist even that our allies conform to our national ideals. As an example, he suggests that the United States should "contain" Russia within its present limits rather than attempt either to ignore or to annihilate her.

Kennan's well-mannered but devastating attack on American diplomacy has seemed to some to be more accurate in its factual detail than it is justified in its conclusions. Unless one assumes that the foreign policy of the United States was in some sense crucial, this analysis loses most of its force. Yet many would contest this assumption and argue that the pattern of events was shaped by forces and by nations over which the wisest of American policies could not have triumphed. The author is, of course, aware of these implications of his theme and somewhat hesitant about suggesting exactly what would have happened in world politics had this country acted differently. Yet his diffidence can hardly be accepted as a proof; and it may be that by laying such

store by our policy, he is guilty in some measure of the nationalistic orientation of which he accuses others.

Further, one wonders how amoral Kennan, and the United States government, could be in a crisis. Would he have us select our friends solely on the basis of their power status? Would he recommend that we act in time of war totally without regard to international law and justice? To assume that the United States could behave in this manner is to base its foreign policy on an illusion quite as dangerous as the idealistic one he deplores. Indeed, the persuasiveness of Kennan's prose, and the justice of his criticism of the past tend to obscure the incompleteness of his formula for the present and the future. For example, the difficulties of adjusting a balance of power in which there are only two great powers were not present in previous centuries. Moreover, to try to solve a crisis based importantly upon moral issues precisely by avoiding moral judgments seems less than completely practical.

Almost no one who has criticized *American Diplomacy, 1900-1951* has raised the slightest question concerning its worth. Kennan has put questions to our diplomatic history which have called forth deeply searching answers. At a time when so many areas of international tension call for immediate decisions, he has made us pause and consider the importance of having a philosophy of international relations which will save us from errors of sudden heat and confusion. Whatever steps are taken to meet this need and to base it in the realities of our diplomatic history will be the more informed for this able and stimulating study.

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World War II

THE Cambridge historian, Herbert Butterfield, recently wrote: "Behind the great conflicts of mankind is a terrible human predicament which lies at the heart of the story: . . . Contemporaries fail to see the predicament or refuse to recognize its genuineness so that our knowledge of it comes from later analysis. It is only with the progress of historical science on a particular subject that men come really to recognize that there was a terrible knot almost beyond the ingenuity of man to untie."

I do not suppose that this was any more true of World War II than of any other great conflict. But the fact remains that it was a war poorly understood by the peoples who fought it on the democratic side, and particularly ourselves; and I am sure that this lack of understanding of what was involved in the conflict itself has much to do with the great bewilderment and trouble we seem now to be experiencing in our attempts to adjust ourselves to the situation it left in its train.

It occurs to me that perhaps the most helpful thing to understand about this recent war is the extent to which it was prejudiced, as a military encounter, before it was begun—the extent to which, you might say, it was not fully winnable.

Let me explain how this was. Before the war began the overwhelming portion of the world's armed strength in land forces and air forces had accumulated in the hands of three political entities—Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, and Imperial Japan. All these entities were deeply and dangerously hostile to the Western democracies. As things stood in the late thirties, if these three powers were to combine their efforts and stick together in a military enterprise, the remaining Western nations plainly had no hope of defeating them on the land mass of Europe and Asia, with the armaments

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at hand or even those in prospect. In Europe and Asia, Western democracy had become militarily outclassed. The world balance of power had turned decisively against it.

I am not claiming that this was perceived, or would have been easy to perceive, by Western statesmen. But I believe it was a reality. And, as such, it plainly limited the actual prospects for the West, if war were to come. Of the three totalitarian powers, Japan was the only one which could conceivably be defeated by the democracies without invoking for this purpose the aid of one of the other totalitarian powers. In the case of Germany and Russia, circumstances were bitter. Together, they could not be defeated at all. Individually, either of them could be defeated only if the democracies had the collaboration of the other.

But such collaboration, if permitted to proceed to the point of complete victory, would mean the relative strengthening of the collaborating power and its eventual appearance as a greedy and implacable claimant at the peace table. Not only that: any war in which one of these two powers was fighting on the side of the democracies could scarcely be fought to a complete and successful finish without placing the collaborating totalitarian power in occupation of large parts of eastern Europe simply by virtue of the sweep of military operations.

As things stood in 1939, therefore, the Western democracies were already under the handicap of being militarily the weaker party. They could hardly have expected to avoid paying the price. Theirs were no longer the choices of strength. The cards were so stacked against them that any complete, unsullied democratic victory in a new world war was practically impossible to foresee.

Now it may be asked, from the vantage point of hindsight, whether, if this was the case, Western statesmen would not have been wiser in the years prior to hostilities to have shaped their policies in such a way as to embroil the totalitarian powers with one another in order that they might exhaust themselves and leave the security of the Western democracies undiminished. This is of course precisely what Soviet propaganda has charged Western statesmen with doing in the thirties, and indeed some of their actions were so ambiguous and ill advised as to seem to lend substance to the charge. Actually, it would be flattering to the vigor and in-

cisiveness of Western policy in those unhappy years of the late thirties if we could believe that it was capable of such desperate and Machiavellian undertakings. I personally can find no evidence that any substantial body of responsible opinion in any of the Western countries really wished for war at all at that time—even one between Russia and Germany. It was plain that a war between the Nazis and the Russian Communists could take place only over the prostrate bodies of the small states of eastern Europe. And, notwithstanding the tragedy of Munich, the extinction of the independence of these eastern European states was something no one wished for. If other evidence of this were lacking, one had the bald fact that it was, after all, the issue of the independence of Poland for which the French and British finally went to war in 1939.

The fact is that a policy aimed deliberately at the embroilment of the totalitarian powers against each other was, for subjective reasons, never really a practical alternative for democratic statesmen. People who wish well for the democratic idea can find in that fact a source of hope or despair, depending on how they look at it. And as the shades of war closed down over Europe in the summer of 1939, the dilemma of Western statesmen, as we now see it in retrospect, was clear and inescapable. There was no prospect for victory over Germany, unless it were with the help of Russia. But for such help, even if it were forthcoming, the Western democracies would have to pay heavily in the military consequences of the war and in the demands that would be raised at the peace table. Their military purposes, in other words, were mortgages in advance. They might be achieved, as far as Germany was concerned; but there would be a heavy political charge against them. This was not, incidentally, merely a matter of collaboration with Soviet Russia. The tortured compromises the democracies were destined eventually to make with Vichy and with Franco Spain and elsewhere were all part of this pattern. They were part of the price of Western military weakness.

It is important that these things be recognized; for when we look at the problem of Western powers in this light, bearing in mind the unpromising nature of the military undertaking on which they were embarking in 1939, we begin to wonder whether the great mistakes of Western statesmen in connection with this world war

were really those of the wartime period at all—whether they were not rather the earlier mistakes, or perhaps we ought to say earlier “circumstances”—which had permitted the development of a situation so grievously and fatefully “loaded” against Western interests. This is of course the problem of the deeper origins of the war; and I think we have no choice but to face it, for the thought at once suggests itself that the best way to win so inauspicious a war might have been to find some way in which one would not have had to fight it at all. By September, 1939, it was of course too late for this. By that time the French and British had no choice, any more than we had in the Pacific in the days following Pearl Harbor. But was there a time when it was *not* too late?

The question as to what Western statesmen might have done to avoid World War II is not an easy one. It is a little disconcerting to find respectable scholars, such as the French historian Bainville, claiming as early as 1920 to see a peculiar logic in the situation flowing from World War I and predicting quite accurately, on the basis of this logic, the general course of events up to and including the outbreak of World War II. It is disconcerting because it leads you to ask whether World War II was not perhaps implicit in the outcome of World War I; in the fact that England and France had been injured and weakened far more deeply than they knew in that first encounter; in the fact that Austria-Hungary and Russia were both lost for the maintenance of European stability, Austria-Hungary because she had disappeared entirely, Russia because her energies and resources had been captured by people violently hostile to capitalist democracy in general; and in the fact that the Germans—frustrated, impoverished, stung with defeat, uncertain in the breakdown of their traditional institutions—were nevertheless left as the only great united people in Central Europe. Looking at these things, it is easy to conclude that World War II just could not help but develop, that it was nothing more than the inevitable aftermath of World War I. You then start poking back into the origins of the earlier war to discover the real sources of the instability of our time. And from this standpoint it is only a step to absolving the Western statesmen of the twenties and thirties of all responsibility for the second war and to regarding them exclusively as the actors in a tragedy beyond their making or repair.

This is of course an extremism. Statesmen, it is true, generally inherit from their predecessors predicaments and dilemmas to which they can see no complete solutions; their ability to improve situations by action over the short term is often quite genuinely limited; but over the long term (and two decades is a respectable length of time) there are always some choices at their disposal. I think it fair to say that World War I was a genuine tragedy which left the Western world much worse off afterward than it had been before and significantly narrowed the choices of Western statesmen in the postwar period; but it did not eliminate those choices entirely. There were, in other words, still things that "could have been done" and which we may assume would at least have been helpful and have had greater possibilities of preventing further tragedy than the things that were done. In so far as we are talking about Germany, there are two such things that strike me as of obvious importance, and in both of them we Americans could, had we wished, have taken a considerable part. First, we could have tried to give greater understanding, support, and encouragement to the modern forces in the Weimar Republic. And if that did not succeed in preventing the rise of nazism, then we could have taken a stiffer and more resolute attitude against Hitler's earlier encroachments and provocations.

It is the last of these two possibilities, that of a stronger stand against Hitler at an earlier date, that has received most prominence in Western thought and has constituted the source of most reproaches to democratic statesmanship between the wars. Unquestionably, such a policy might have enforced a greater circumspection on the Nazi regime and caused it to proceed more slowly with the actualization of its timetable. From this standpoint, firmness at the time of the reoccupation of the Rhineland in 1936 would probably have yielded even better results than firmness at the time of Munich. But I wondered whether we do not tend to exaggerate the relative importance of this question of stopping Hitler once he was in power, as compared with the importance of seeing to it that a person of his ilk should not come into power at all in a great Western country. It was a defeat for the West, of course, that Hitler was able to consolidate his power and be successful in the years 1933-39. But actually the West had suffered

an even greater defeat on the day when the German people found itself in such a frame of mind that it could, without great resistance or remonstrance, accept a Hitler as its leader and master.

A stiffer attitude on the part of the Western democracies might, it is true, have resulted in Hitler's overthrow and his replacement by a less obnoxious regime before war could come; in fact, there is evidence that a revolt might well have been attempted had the British and French had the perceptiveness to stand firm at the time of Munich. But great uncertainties lay along this path. The hypnotic charm of naziism was already strong upon the German people. If anyone had overthrown Hitler, presumably it would have been the generals. Whether they would have been able to control the situation subsequently, to lay the ghost not only of naziism but of German aggressiveness in general, and to adjust peaceably their relations with the West, is not certain. The great misfortune of the West, I suspect, was not Hitler but the weakness of German society which made possible his triumph. And it is this which takes us back to this question of the attitude of the Western democracies toward the Weimar Republic.

Events have moved so fast that we have almost lost sight of this intensely interesting period in German history—the period before 1933, with its amazing cultural and intellectual flowering, so full of hope and yet so close to despair. In the decade of the twenties Berlin was the most alive of the capitals of Europe, and things were taking place there from which the Western democracies might have derived profit and instruction. It is true that the peace treaty we Americans concluded with Weimar Germany was nonpunitive. Americans cannot be justly charged with any political offensiveness toward the new Germany. We even financed her lavishly, though foolishly. But what I am thinking of pertained not just to us but to the Western democracies in general, and it was something more than political or financial: it was a general attitude of distaste and suspicion, intermingled with a sort of social snobbery so grotesque that as late as 1927 a German could still be prohibited from using the golf links at Geneva, the seat of the League of Nations. We did nothing to harm Weimar Germany; but we left it very much to its own devices. There are times when that is a good policy toward another country. But I fear that this was not

one of those times. Here, in any case, were lost opportunities; and it is significant that they lay as much in the cultural and intellectual as in the political field.

Now a word about Russia, the second totalitarian party. Was there nothing we could have done, prior to 1939, to keep this great country out of the camp of our adversaries? I am sorry that we cannot devote an entire lecture to this subject, for it is an interesting one and close to my heart. I do not feel that we in this country always conducted ourselves in the manner best calculated to reduce the dimensions of the Soviet threat. I think we might have done more to win the respect, if not the liking, of the Russian Communists; and the respect of your enemies—as we are apt sometimes to forget—is nothing to be sneezed at. But I know of little that we could have done to alter basically the political personality of the Bolshevik leadership or to moderate the violent preconceptions against Western democracy on which it was reared and with which it came into power. These things had deep psychological roots, lying in specifically Russian phenomena. Whether the capitalist democracies of the West had done things prior to 1917 to deserve this burning hostility, I do not know. But I am sure that, once developed, it was hardly to be altered by anything the West might do directly; and the best reaction to it on our part would have been at all times an attitude of great reserve, consistency, and dignity.

As for Japan, the problem of whether she had also to be ranged against us in war in the early 1940's was of course primarily our problem, not that of the French and British: I would wish that we could skip it entirely for purposes of this discussion; for it is a tremendous subject in itself, relatively remote from the causes of the war in Europe, and not easy to treat in a few words. But the fact of our simultaneous involvement with Japan and Germany was so important an element in the course and outcome of the war that I think one cannot simply pass the question by.

To discuss this problem at all adequately would be to discuss the entire sequence of American-Japanese relations over the half-century preceding the outbreak of war in the Pacific; and that we obviously cannot do here. To this we must add the disturbing fact that there can never be any certainty about these post mortems on

history. It does seem plain that, as the earlier decades and years of this century went by and the hour of Pearl Harbor approached, the choices of American statesmen that held promise of averting a war with Japan became narrower and narrower, and no one can be sure, I suppose, that anything we might have done or failed to do in the final years and months before the Japanese attack could really have forestalled the final outcome. If there were happier possibilities, they were surely more abundant in the more distant past, when our allotment of time was more generous and our area of diplomatic maneuver greater. But whether such possibilities really existed must remain a matter of opinion. My own feeling, for whatever it is worth, is that a policy carefully and realistically aimed at the avoidance of a war with Japan and less encumbered with other motives would certainly have produced a line of action considerably different from that which we actually pursued and would presumably have led to quite different results.

But I think it is enough for us to record that here again, as in the European theater, if there were ways in which this war might have been avoided altogether, they were probably ways that did relate to the more distant past: to a period when people were not thinking about war at all and had no idea that the things they were doing or failing to do were creating for them this tremendous predicament of the future.

So we are back again to our fundamental fact that by the year 1939 affairs were really quite inauspicious for the Western democracies. The situation which they had allowed to arise was one for which there were no complete cures. Whether they realized it or not, the war could be for them, in the deeper sense, at best a war of defense: a war that might bring immediate survival but could scarcely bring an improvement in the stability of the world they lived in, and certainly not the advance of any of the more positive and constructive purposes of democracy. When this is borne in mind, the great decisions of the war years themselves appear for the most part in a more charitable light.

The first of these great decisions which deserves mention seems to me to have been our own decision—if we may call it that—not to enter the European war until the Germans declared war upon us. This was of course comparable to our behavior in World War I,

when we refrained from entering until an overt German action, namely, the declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare, brought us in. And what seems to me most interesting about our conduct in each of these cases is the marked change in our emotional attitude toward the struggle itself, once we had become formally involved in it. Theoretically, if the issues involved in the European struggle were really as vital to us as we persuaded ourselves they were in the years 1942-45, they were surely no less important from 1939 to 1941. Actually, in that earlier period, before the German attack on Russia, the cause of the British and French could really be called the cause of freedom and democracy, for very little else was involved on the Western side; whereas later, when we did discover that our vital stake in the anti-German cause warranted great military sacrifice on our part, it was at a time when that cause had been rendered ambiguous, as anything more than a defensive undertaking, by the participation of the U.S.S.R. on the side of the democracies.

Now I mention this, because, making all due allowance for the deliberateness of the opinion-forming process in a democracy, it does look as though the real source of the emotional fervor which we Americans are able to put into a war lies less in any objective understanding of the wider issues involved than in a profound irritation over the fact that other people have finally provoked us to the point where we had no alternative but to take up arms. This lends to the democratic war effort a basically punitive note, rather than one of expediency. I mention this because, if there is anything in this thought, it goes far to explain the difficulty we have in employing force for rational and restricted purposes rather than for purposes which are emotional and to which it is hard to find a rational limit.

Once we had come into the European war, and granted the heavy military handicaps with which the Western powers were then confronted in that theater, the decisions taken throughout the remainder of the war years were those of harried, overworked men, operating in the vortex of a series of tremendous pressures, military and otherwise, which we today find it difficult to remember or to imagine. I think that some injustice is being done both to the men in question and to the cause of historical understanding

by the latter-day interpretations which regard specific decisions of the wartime years as the source of all our present difficulties. The most vociferous charges of wartime mistakes relate primarily to our dealings with the U.S.S.R., and particularly to the wartime conferences of Moscow, Teheran, and Yalta. As one who was very unhappy about these conferences at the time they were taking place and very worried lest they lead to false hopes and misunderstandings, I may perhaps be permitted to say that I think their importance has recently been considerably overrated. If it cannot be said that the Western democracies gained very much from these talks with the Russians, it would also be incorrect to say that they gave very much away. The establishment of Soviet military power in eastern Europe and the entry of Soviet forces into Manchuria was not the result of these talks; it was the result of the military operations during the concluding phases of the war. There was nothing the Western democracies could have done to prevent the Russians from entering these areas except to get there first, and this they were not in a position to do. The implication that Soviet forces would not have gone into Manchuria if Roosevelt had not arrived at the Yalta understanding with Stalin is surely nonsense. Nothing could have stopped the Russians from participating in the final phases of the Pacific war, in order to be in at the kill and to profit by an opportunity to gain objectives they had been seeking for half a century.

It is similarly incorrect to portray the Yalta agreement as a terrible betrayal of Nationalist China. The agreement was that we should recommend certain things to the Chinese government. The leaders of that government were not averse to these things at the time. They had asked us, long before Yalta, to help them to arrange their affairs with the Soviet government. They later expressed themselves as well satisfied with what we had done. And in the subsequent negotiations which they themselves conducted independently with the Russians and which actually constituted the controlling arrangements for the future of Manchuria, they went in some respects further in the way of concessions to the Soviet Union than anything that had been agreed upon at Yalta and recommended to them by us. They did this despite the fact that they were specifically

warned by us that in doing so they were acting on their own responsibility and not at our recommendation.

The worst that can fairly be said about the wartime conferences from the practical standpoint, therefore, is that they were somewhat redundant and led to a certain number of false hopes here and elsewhere. But we must remember, in this connection, that these conferences had a distinct value as practical demonstrations of our readiness and eagerness to establish better relations with the Soviet regime and of the difficulties we encountered in our effort to do so. Like other evidences of patience and good will, they were important for the record. Had we not gone into them, it is my guess that we would still be hearing reproachful voices saying: "You claim that cooperation with Russia is not possible. How do you know? You never even tried."

A more substantial charge against our wartime policy toward Russia, although one we hear less about, is that which relates to the continuation of lend-lease during the latter period of the war, and specifically subsequent to midsummer of 1944. By that time, as you will recall, Russia's own territory had been freed of the enemy; our own talking position vis-à-vis the Russians had been considerably improved by the creation of a successful second front; and from there on out whatever the Russian forces did was bound to have important political consequences for European peoples other than the Germans—consequences which went far beyond the mere defeat of Germany. I think it can be well argued that there was no adequate justification for refusing to give any attention to these developing political problems and for continuing a program of lavish and almost indiscriminate aid to the Soviet Union at a time when there was increasing reason to doubt whether her purposes in eastern Europe, aside from the defeat of Germany, would be ones which we Americans could approve and sponsor.

But in all these matters we must bear in mind both the overriding compulsion of military necessity under which our statesmen were working and also the depth of their conviction that one had no choice but to gamble on the possibility that Soviet suspicions might be broken down and Soviet collaboration won for the post-war period, if there were to be any hope of permanent peace. Many of us who were familiar with Russian matters were impatient with

this line of thought at the time, because we knew how poor were the chances of success, and we saw no reason why a Western world which kept its nerves, its good humor, and a due measure of military preparedness should not continue indefinitely to live in the same world with the power of the Kremlin without flying to either of the extremes of political intimacy or war. In the light of what has occurred subsequently, I can see that our view, too, was not fully rounded. We were right about the nature of Soviet power; but we were wrong about the ability of American democracy at this stage in its history to bear for long a situation full of instability, inconvenience, and military danger. Perhaps Harry Hopkins and F.D.R. had more reason than we then supposed to believe that everything depended on the possibility of changing the attitude of the Soviet regime. But, if so, this is then only an indication that the dilemma was crueler than any of us really appreciated, and the crisis of our time one of such profundity that even the vast dislocations of World War II were only a partial symptom of it.

And there is no reason to suppose that, had we behaved differently either with respect to lend-lease or with respect to the war-time conferences, the outcome of military events in Europe would have been greatly different than it was. We might have wasted less money and material than we did. We might have arrived in the center of Europe slightly sooner and less encumbered with obligations to our Soviet allies. The postwar line of division between East and West might have lain somewhat farther east than it does today, and that would certainly be a relief to everyone concerned. But we were still up against the basic dilemma that Hitler was a man with whom a compromise peace was impracticable and unthinkable and that, while "unconditional surrender" was probably not a wise thing to talk a lot about and make into a wartime slogan, in reality there was no promising alternative but to pursue this unhappy struggle to its bitter end, whether you were acting in agreement with your Russian allies or whether you were not; and this meant that sooner or later you would end on some sort of a line in eastern or Central Europe, probably more central than eastern, with ourselves on one side and Soviet forces on the other, and with the understanding between us just about what it has proved to be in these six years since the termination of hostilities.

Remembering these things, I think we are justified in asking whether the greatest mistakes of World War II were really these tortured and hard-pressed decisions which defined military operations and gave shape to inter-Allied relations in the stress of military operations—whether they were really, in other words, the errors of decision on the part of a few highly placed individuals—whether they were not rather the deeper mistakes of understanding and attitude on the part of our society in general with respect to a military venture in which we were engaged. First of all, there was the failure to remember the essentially and inescapably defensive nature of this particular war, as one in which we in the West were at first the weaker party, capable of achieving only a portion of our aim and of achieving that portion only in collaboration with a totalitarian adversary and at a price. This failure stemmed from our general ignorance of the historical processes of our age and particularly from our lack of attention to the power realities involved in given situations.

But beyond that, it seems to me, there lay a deeper failure of understanding, a failure to appreciate the limitations of war in general—any war—as a vehicle for the achievement of the objectives of the democratic state. This is the question of the proper relationship of such things as force and coercion to the purposes of democracy. That they have a place in the international as well as the domestic functioning of democracy I would be the last to deny. That will continue to be true until the world is an entirely different world from what we have known it to be throughout our national history. But I would submit that we will continue to harm our own interests almost as much as we benefit them if we continue to employ the instruments of coercion in the international field without a better national understanding of their significance and possibilities. It is essential to recognize that the maiming and killing of men and the destruction of human shelters and other installations, however necessary it may be for other reasons, cannot in itself make a positive contribution to any democratic purpose. It can be the regrettable alternative to similar destruction in our own country or the killing of our own people. It can conceivably protect values which it is necessary to protect and which can be protected in no other way. Occasionally, if used with forethought and circumspec-

tion and restraint, it may trade the lesser violence for the greater and impel the stream of human events into channels which will be more hopeful ones than it would otherwise have taken. But, basically, the democratic purpose does not prosper when a man dies or a building collapses or an enemy force retreats. It may be hard for it to prosper *unless* these things happen, and in that lies the entire justification for the use of force at all as a weapon of national policy. But the actual prospering occurs only when something happens in a man's mind that increases his enlightenment and the consciousness of his real relation to other people—something that makes him aware that, whenever the dignity of another man is offended, his own dignity, as a man among men, is thereby reduced. And this is why the destructive process of war must always be accompanied by, or made subsidiary to, a different sort of undertaking aimed at widening the horizons and changing the motives of men and should never be thought of in itself as a proper vehicle for hopes and enthusiasms and dreams of world improvement. Force, like peace, is not an abstraction; it cannot be understood or dealt with as a concept outside of the given framework of purpose and method. If this were better understood, there could be neither the sweeping moral rejection of international violence which bedevils so many Americans in times of peace nor the helpless abandonment to its compulsions and its inner momentum which characterizes so many of us in times of war.

It is hard for me to say how different would have been our situation today had our public opinion and the mental outlook of our leading persons comprised a comprehension of these realities throughout the entire period of the thirties and forties which we associate with World War II. It is easy to imagine that war might never have come upon us in the form that it did had this been the case. Or, perhaps, even if it had come upon us, we might have been prepared to enter it sooner and in greater force, and thus have been able to end it in a way more favorable to the interests of moderation and stability in world affairs. But these are only conjectures. The historian can never prove that a better comprehension of realities would have prevented any specific calamity or obviated any of the major human predicaments. He can only say that in the law of averages it should have helped.

At the very worst, we can be sure that, had we understood better the elements of our predicament during World War II, we would be calmer and more united and less irritated with one another to-day in this country, for we would have been better prepared for the things that have happened since 1945 and less inclined to mistake them for the product of somebody else's stupidity or bad faith. But actually it is my belief, which I cannot prove, that the benefits would have gone much farther than this. The possibilities which lie in human understanding, like those that lie in darkness and ignorance, are seldom hypothetically demonstrable; but sometimes they are surprising.

